



THE AMERICAN

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# Legion

\$2.50 FEBRUARY 2013

*The magazine for a strong America*

## A Question of Civility

What would George Washington say about today's public discourse?

CAMP LEJEUNE'S

## TOXIC PROBLEM

*Vietnam before the war*

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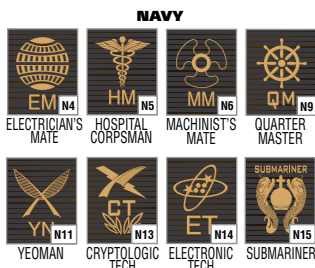
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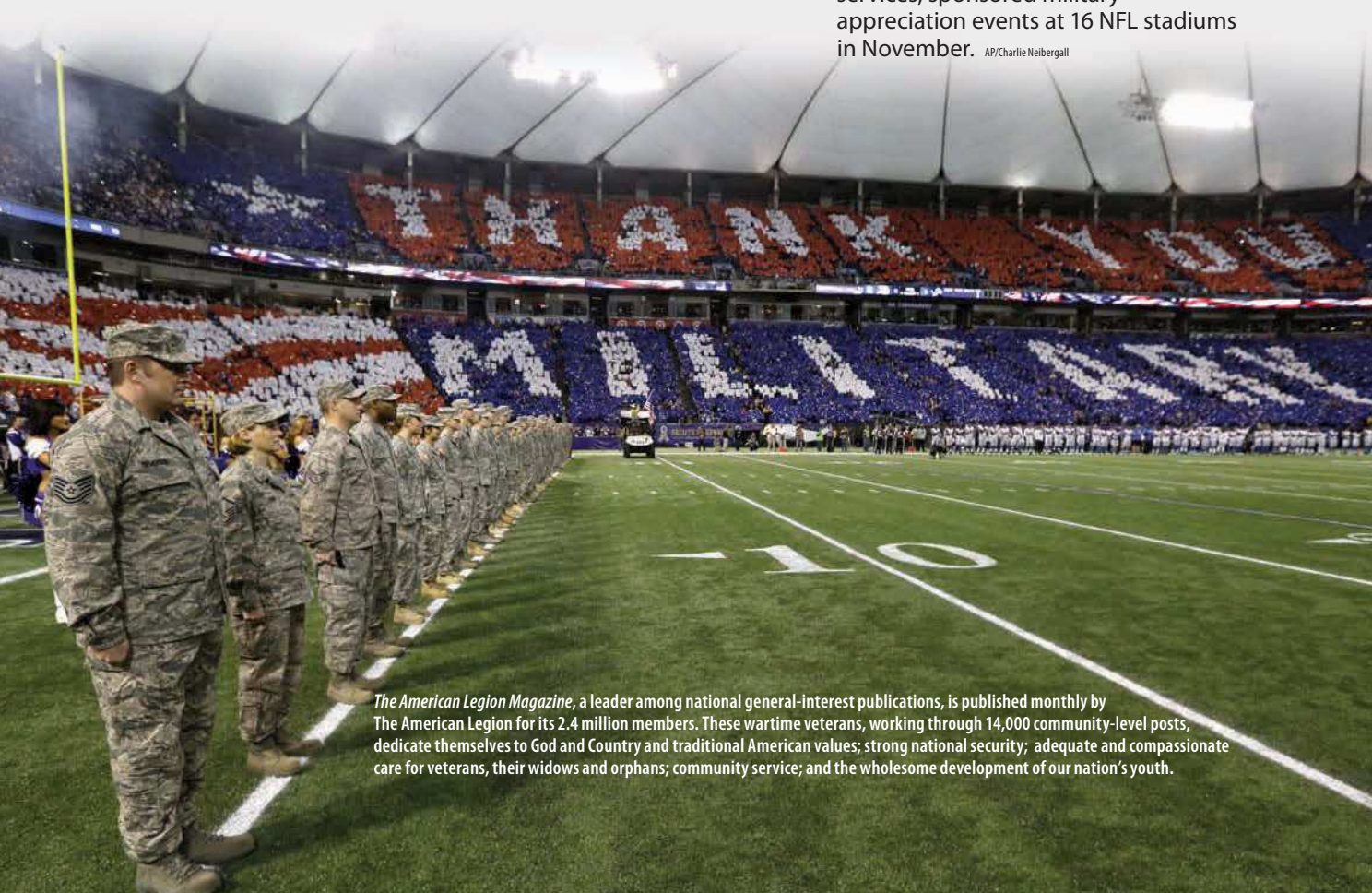
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## SALUTE TO SERVICE

Soldiers line up on the field during a crowd card stunt at a Minnesota Vikings vs. Detroit Lions game in Minneapolis on Veterans Day. USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services, sponsored military appreciation events at 16 NFL stadiums in November. AP/Charlie Neibergall



*The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.4 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.*



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## 'Spartans of Senegal'

I read with interest the article by Mark Seavey (December), as well as Ben Barber's accompanying article on AFRICOM. I am in West Africa often, and spend some of almost every trip in Senegal. Two years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting some of the Marines mentioned by Seavey. I was impressed by their work, and didn't realize the extent to which our military is involved in training troops, especially in West Africa.

Although not sanctioned by the central government, there is persistent harassment and sometimes outright persecution of religious minorities, such as the razing of Protestant churches. Still, Senegal remains a gem in West Africa. I am glad that our men and women in uniform are able to assist in keeping this part of the continent stable.

— Patrick Novak, San Jose, Calif.



Photo by Marine Lt. Dominic William Pitrone

As an Army veteran who served in Honduras, where Joint Task Force Bravo and its humanitarian military efforts were complicated by an ongoing insurgency and a growing drug-trafficking presence, I'd argue that there is little relating to "soft power" that the military on its own can achieve. Joseph Nye Jr.'s definition was political and cultural, and excluded any form of coercion an intervening power might apply.

By definition, the U.S. military cannot apply true soft power. It is very good at its core missions, but it requires other institutions to reach beyond "fighting and winning wars." AFRICOM's purpose was to integrate the State Department and other nonmilitary agencies into the military structure, to coordinate between government agencies that have struggled to work together. But in an out-sized fear of appearing "colonial," AFRICOM is struggling to accomplish its mission. The assassinations in Libya last fall may have been the result of State wanting to "demilitarize" its profile, even in Benghazi.

Seavey notes the dedication and skills of the training team in Senegal, but it is this same practice that leads to the charges against the United States as an interloper. But I salute the work that the troops on the ground are doing, and both articles contain important facts that the public needs to know when considering the United States as a world power.

— Rex Childers, Waterville, Ohio

## 'Upside Down Lives'

I was pleased to see Ken Olsen's article about caregivers and the weight they carry (December). My son-in-law was seriously injured in 2003, and my daughter had to close her legal practice to care for him full time. The price of shattered dreams cannot be measured in dollars, but the caregiver allowance she started receiving this year has helped them financially. Now she doesn't have that worry in addition to caring for her husband. Thank you for opening the eyes of many who may not be aware of the toll on these families.

— David Wayman, Monument, Colo.



I was very upset after reading this article. Why are these veterans living on food stamps, and one family with six children receiving \$1,200 a month in caregiver money? They certainly deserve that much and more. It is disgraceful how the government is treating these veterans. They were all strong and healthy, and came home to nothing.

– Vera Jennings, Tucson, Ariz.

We give millions of dollars annually to foreign countries, lavish money on 9/11 survivors and generously assist areas damaged by bad weather, but we don't take proper care of our wounded veterans. They rightfully belong at the head of the line when our federal government is handing out assistance, and we haven't been doing this.

– Bud Bale, Vestal, N.Y.

### **GOP plan to stop sequestration**

The article on sequestration (Big Issues, December) caught my eye. Were these two House members picked as a joke? Former Rep. Allen West says that all Democrats are communists, and Rep. Chris Van Hollen says that Republicans have caused all of our problems. I have only read about West, but Van Hollen represents me, unfortunately. I always vote for his opponent, hoping for a change.

There are good House members from both parties who could have been interviewed. My guess is that you wanted to insert some humor into our magazine.

– Paul E. Belschner, Kensington, Md.

Rep. Chris Van Hollen's argument that the wealthy don't contribute enough, while fallacious, is working. He also neglects to mention that budget cuts are never specified, only promised. The Democrats could have had increases if they had included specificity as to cuts, and their immediate implementation. They never met a tax hike or giveaway program they didn't like, unless it's for the military. Why any Legionnaire pays any attention to these habitual marauders of the truth is beyond my ability to comprehend.

– Charles Block, Woolford, Md.

I'm an Army veteran and I'd like to throw in my two cents regarding defense budget cuts. While there's much hand-wringing going on over the possible cuts, I was appalled at the waste that I saw just as a lowly infantry grunt: thousands of blank rounds thrown away after a field exercise, hundreds of gallons of gas dumped out and much more. Navy vets have told me about brand-new equipment dumped overboard. I am all for a strong military, but some accountability should be had about how all these tax dollars are just being flushed away.

– Bill Robitelle, Pembroke, N.H.

### **'Hometown Hero'**

My father, Russel Winsett, also survived Pearl Harbor (Rapid Fire, December). He was aboard USS *Pennsylvania* at the time of the attack, and never spoke about the horror and destruction to me or my two brothers as we grew up. He is now 92. I was

fortunate enough to conduct two video interviews with him recounting that morning, and they have been sent to the archives at the Library of Congress in Washington.

– Ronald Winsett, Bonita Springs, Fla.

I remember Pearl Harbor well. It was the day that changed my, and every American's, life. I was listening to an NFL playoff game on the radio when an announcer interrupted to say that the president wanted to address the citizens. He went into details of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and said that the day would live in infamy. One month later, I enlisted. The rest is history – I served in the 69th Infantry Division in France, went all the way to Leipzig and met the Russians at the Elbe River.

– Robert Ivey, Victor, N.Y.

### **A memorial like no other**

I was touched by November's cover featuring the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall. As a three-tour Vietnam veteran with more than 400 combat missions, I have made rubbings of the names of many close friends who were killed. I have traveled to Connecticut, Colorado and California to visit the "Wall That Heals," and was honored to be on the Wall's board of advisers for several years.

– Joseph V. Potter, Colorado Springs, Colo.

**Editor's note:** A letter in December's Vet Voice should have stated that Minot Air Force Base is in North Dakota, not Maryland. The error was not the fault of the letter's author.

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# VA site visits focus on women's care

I returned from Vietnam in 1971, two years before our nation ended the draft and established an all-volunteer force. At that time, only about 42,000 enlisted women were serving on active duty. Four decades later, that number is more than 165,000, and an additional 35,000 women serve as officers. In 2012, women made up 15 percent of the military.

Once limited mainly to clerical and nursing roles, women now fly aircraft and serve aboard submarines. They're still excluded from units whose primary mission is to engage in ground combat, but let's not fool ourselves: America's women in uniform have assumed the same risks as their male counterparts in Iraq and Afghanistan, where enemy tactics frequently turn areas "outside the wire" into combat zones. Women serving today, as the fighting front now surrounds everyone in theater, are combat veterans in every sense of the word.

Even as barriers are removed for women in the military, though, they are leaving active duty only to find that the veterans health-care system has barriers of its own. Since 2000, the number of women using VA health care has more than doubled, from nearly 160,000 to more than 337,000 in 2011. Women are the fastest-growing group of veterans enrolling in the system, and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki admitted early on that the department was late in addressing the surge.

Facing health-care needs unique to veterans who are women – reproductive issues, cervical and breast cancer screenings, and maternity and newborn care, on top of mental health problems related to PTSD and military sexual assault – VA has worked hard to expand its services. It has hired more female practitioners, improved training for women's health providers, and added private changing rooms and bathrooms at VA facilities to create a more welcoming environment for women.

But what perceptions and obstacles still prevent some women from enrolling? What quality-of-care challenges do women face at VA? And how can VA improve access and quality of care for women? These are questions that The American Legion's System Worth Saving (SWS) Task Force has been asking during 15 site visits to VA medical centers across the country. As the Legion's primary evaluation tool for VA health care, the task force conducts a series of visits annually to assess timeliness and quality of care, and to get feedback from veterans. SWS findings are compiled in a report that's given to the president, members of Congress and senior VA officials.

The 2012-2013 SWS report will focus on women's health-care programs in VA. With seven visits completed, the task force is heading next to Salem, Va.; Las Vegas; Coatesville, Pa.; San Antonio; Madison, Wis.; Spokane, Wash.; and St. Cloud, Minn. In each department, Legionnaires are encouraged to participate in a town hall meeting and VA site visits, where they can offer valuable insight into the issues and concerns of local veterans. Call the Legion's Washington office at (202) 861-2700 to find out more, or go to [www.legion.org/systemworthsaving](http://www.legion.org/systemworthsaving) for a schedule of site visits.

Every veteran, man or woman, is a stakeholder in VA. The SWS Task Force visits are a rare opportunity to communicate to our nation's leaders and VA what's working and what's not. Let's get involved.

*James E. "Jim" Koutz*



National Commander  
James E. Koutz

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### WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

This month, The American Legion's 53rd Washington Conference will bring hundreds of Legionnaires to the nation's capital, where they will meet with lawmakers and department officials. Among the events:

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Washington Hilton, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Feb. 21. Contact Steve Gonzalez, Economic Division:

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Washington Hilton, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 22

#### ■ Veterans Education

**Symposium**, Washington Hilton, 1 p.m. Feb. 24

#### ■ "Know Before You Go"

**legislative briefing**, Washington Hilton, 4 p.m. Feb. 25

■ **Commander's Call**, Washington Hilton, 8:30 a.m., Feb. 26

#### ■ Veterans Business

**Development Workshop**, Washington Hilton, 9 a.m. Feb. 26-27

#### ■ National PR Luncheon

Washington Hilton, noon Feb. 27

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# I AM THE AMERICAN LEGION

*"My joy comes from helping those who are the Legion – the Legionnaires ... helping them at Legion College and teaching them the things we do to support veterans."*

## PIERRE HARPER

**BRANCH OF SERVICE:** Marine Corps

**YEARS:** 1998-2003

**MOS:** 0431 Embarkation Chief

**RANK AT DISCHARGE:** Corporal (E-4)

### DECORATIONS

- Naval Achievement Medal
- Good Conduct Medal
- Naval Unit Commendation
- Naval Unit Citation
- National Defense Medal

### AMERICAN LEGION POST

Bennett-Wells Post 1780, Buffalo, N.Y.

**NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE LEGION:** Five

### OFFICES

- New York Boys State governor (1997)
- Post 1780 commander (2008-2011)
- County vice commander (2010-present)
- County Boys State chairman (2008-present)
- New York American Legion College instructor (2009-present)
- National Foreign Relations Council vice chairman (2010, 2012)
- 100th Anniversary Observance Committee (2011-present)
- National American Legion College facilitator

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# Federal funding of green energy



## SUPPORT

**Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn.**

■ Himes is a member of the House Committee on Financial Services.

For too long, our addiction to Middle East oil has resulted in our funding both sides in the war on terror, and left us vulnerable to the whims of unstable foreign governments and dangerous dictators. We should invest in renewable energy sources – solar, geothermal and nuclear – and build a smart grid that will improve our energy efficiency. We must also take advantage of our nation's vast natural gas resources. The cheapest energy is the energy we don't use.

The United States now produces more of its own energy than ever before, and we have every possibility of becoming energy independent in the next 20 years. But it will require a serious commitment to reach that challenging – yet attainable – goal.

In the coming decades, the world will turn away from fossil fuels, especially petroleum. If we want U.S. companies to profit from this change, we must invest now in finding the technologies, fuels and efficiencies that will help them succeed.

The United States led and profited from the Internet revolution because the Defense Department invested in a network for computer communication that eventually evolved into the Internet we enjoy today. A hand-held GPS device can direct you to a location anywhere in the world because the U.S. government funded satellites that transmit that information. These were huge projects that changed our way of life, and they were not done by any one company or government alone.

These advancements were the result of the same type of public-private partnerships that we need to advance the clean energy revolution. To ignore this challenge would concede the race to China and India and abdicate our responsibility to leave a better, stronger America for the next generation.



## OPPOSE

**Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich.**

■ Upton is chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

We have many lessons to learn from Solyndra, the now-bankrupt California solar-panel manufacturer that received a \$535 million stimulus loan guarantee from the Obama administration. Right up until Solyndra's bankruptcy, the administration trumpeted the company as the hallmark of its green jobs program, but our investigation revealed a much different picture.

As Solyndra's loan guarantee was finalized, administration experts warned that it was a bad bet. A Department of Energy (DoE) expert even predicted that Solyndra

would be out of cash in September 2011 – the same month the company was raided by the FBI and its doors shut, laying off 1,900 workers.

But the administration doubled down, investing millions more in restructuring Solyndra's loan guarantee and putting wealthy investors with close ties to the president ahead of taxpayers, in violation of the law. Now those taxpayers are on the hook for half a billion dollars.

We found DoE's loan guarantee program to be poorly managed, tainted with politics and lacking safeguards to protect taxpayers against risky government bets. Three of the first five companies that received a loan guarantee under Section 1705 have filed for bankruptcy, and others are teetering on the edge.

With the federal debt eclipsing \$16 trillion, we cannot afford to spend money we do not have on projects that fail to deliver jobs promised. The House approved legislation I authored with Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., to help eliminate wasteful spending and protect taxpayers from government gambles. The "No More Solyndras Act" phases out DoE's mismanaged loan guarantee program and ensures that taxpayers are protected.

## THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

*Advocates say federally funded green energy is an alternative to fossil fuel use. Critics say the Obama administration's program is rife with waste and fraud, and has cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.*

## CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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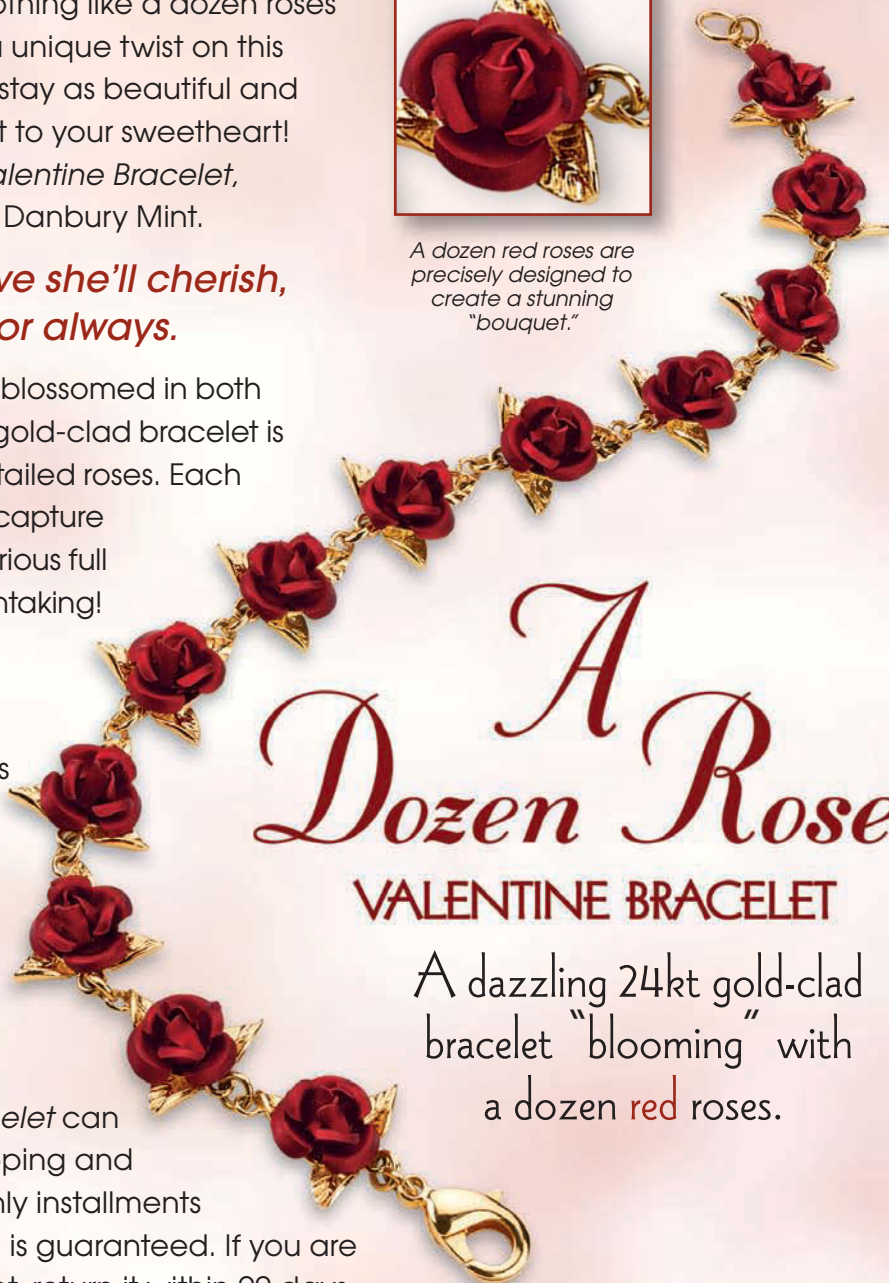
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- 3 Glendale, Tenn.
- 4 Miami
- 5 Las Vegas
- 6 Birmingham, Ala.
- 7 Sacramento, Calif.
- 8 Tampa, Fla.
- 9 San Antonio
- 10 Jacksonville, Fla.

Safest cities for driving (in no particular order):

Boston  
Buffalo, N.Y.  
Cleveland  
Hartford, Conn.  
Newark, N.J.  
Plano, Texas  
Providence, R.I.  
Salt Lake City  
Santa Ana, Calif.  
St. Paul, Minn.

Sources: CDC, Prevention, WebMD



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Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

# When pain won't stop

BY MARTIN SAYERS

Chronic pain is a serious condition affecting millions of Americans, yet most people know little about the problem or what it can mean to those suffering from it.

**What is chronic pain?** According to the American Pain Society, chronic pain “continues beyond the normal time expected for resolution of the problem, or persists or recurs for other reasons.” In simple terms, it is pain that simply will not go away – meaning that the lives of people suffering chronic pain are deeply affected, and they are often prevented from carrying out certain activities. For some, this may mean having to avoid lifting heavy objects or being particularly active, while more severe cases can leave sufferers unable to get out of bed. Chronic pain can last anywhere from a few months to a lifetime, and can sometimes lead to depression as victims find it difficult to adapt.

**What causes chronic pain?** Prolonged bouts of pain can be caused by an intense injury or a bout of illness, but doctors and scientists are still unclear as to why these subside naturally in most patients but lead to chronic pain in others, especially if there is no discernible medical reason for it. What has been established is that prolonged discomfort can damage the nervous system, diminishing the body's ability to ease pain.

Studies suggest that chronic pain may be the result of pain pathways becoming overly sensitive and thus constantly active, much like a car alarm that will not stop going off. The pain messages sent to the brain are amplified and the brain itself becomes overly sensitive to these signals, creating pain sensations over and above what would normally be required. Research also suggests that people with depression are more likely to develop chronic pain.

**How can it be treated?** Certain antidepressants may be prescribed for chronic pain, as they can be effective in changing the way the brain responds to pain triggers. However, studies are also

showing that the mind can be just as effective as any drug, and some doctors are starting to favor a cognitive behavioral approach to the problem, helping patients accept the presence of the pain and work on coping mechanisms.

Alternative remedies such as acupuncture and hypnotherapy have also appeared successful in reducing symptoms, while a herbal treatment made from the roots of the wild yam plant is used due to its ability to reduce muscle spasms and inflammation throughout the body.

**The expert view.** Dr. David Maine, director of the Center for Interventional Pain Medicine at Baltimore's Mercy Medical Center, says that anyone suffering from chronic pain should not despair, as help is available. “My advice to anyone suffering from chronic pain is to talk to your doctor and do not lose hope,” he says. “A specialist can often help manage the many facets of chronic pain, and I believe the best treatment for chronic pain is a multidisciplinary patient-focused approach. This often combines multiple avenues of treatment – medical, interventional and behavioral – into one treatment plan. These treatments can sometimes work better together than individually, so physician collaboration and communication is key.”

*Martin Sayers is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, England. He specializes in health and nutrition issues.*



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# Thirteen is your lucky number

The body requires 13 different vitamins to function at its best. Vitamin supplements can help meet these needs, but a balanced diet is important. The following foods, though not all necessarily popular or well known, are high in essential vitamins:

**Vitamin A** Liver, dried apricots, paprika, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, carrots

**Vitamin B1 (thiamin)** Marmite, sesame butter and seeds, pistachios, pecans, macadamia nuts, pork chops

**Vitamin B2 (riboflavin)** Dry roasted soybeans, sun-dried tomatoes, cheese (Brie, Roquefort, Limburger), wheat bran, fish (mackerel, Atlantic salmon, trout)

**Vitamin B3 (niacin)** Fish (anchovies, tuna, swordfish), peanuts, bacon, lean veal, sun-dried tomatoes

**Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid)** Whey powder, avocados, mushrooms, caviar

**Vitamin B6** Crude rice, wheat bran, dried herbs and spices, lean pork tenderloin, garlic, hazelnuts

**Vitamin B7 (biotin)** Fish (salmon and sardines), brown rice, turkey, chicken breasts, eggs

**Vitamin B9 (folate)** Asparagus, beans (pinto, garbanzo, mung), bean sprouts (soybean and pea), turnip greens, spinach

**Vitamin B12 (cobalamin)** Beef, cheese, eggs, shellfish, octopus, lamb

**Vitamin C** Red and green hot chili peppers, kiwis, papayas, fresh herbs (thyme and parsley), kale, mustard greens, cauliflower

**Vitamin D** Cod liver oil, fortified cereals, tofu, soy milk, salami, oysters

**Vitamin E** Almonds, dried herbs (basil and oregano), pickled green olives, cooked spinach, cooked taro root, dried apricots

**Vitamin K** Spring onions, prunes, cabbage, pickled cucumber, chili powder, curry, broccoli

Sources: WebMD, [www.healthaliciousness.com](http://www.healthaliciousness.com)

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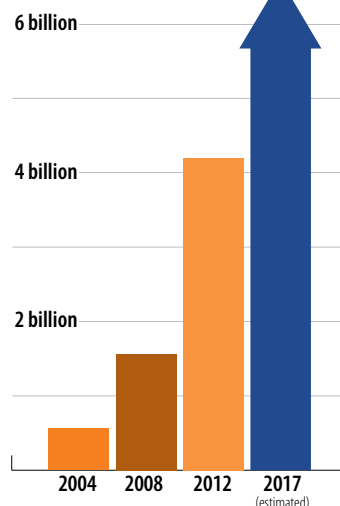
## Goodbye to gluten

The market research firm Packaged Facts tracks the gluten-free industry, and finds that business is booming.

Gluten, a protein found in several different grains, can interfere with proper digestion, a condition known as celiac disease. The disease is estimated to affect about 1 percent of Americans, but Packaged Facts' latest report shows that 18 percent of U.S. adults experimented with gluten-free diets in 2012.

Gluten restriction is believed to aid other conditions, such as the less dire gluten sensitivity and unrelated diseases like autism and irritable bowel syndrome, and is also used in weight-loss efforts.

### Sales of gluten-free products



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# A TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S SOLDIERS

## Defending Freedom Forever

America's soldiers have sacrificed and served courageously in every major military conflict from the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, through both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and recently in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq. Generation after generation of men and women have served our nation to ensure Freedom Forever for all our citizens. Often placing country before self, our soldiers have willingly sacrificed to defend the rights and liberties Americans cherish so deeply. A legendary general once stated, "Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men."

Now, America Remembers proudly honors America's soldiers by introducing a Tribute to America's Soldiers, issued on a working semi-automatic Thompson submachine gun in caliber .45 ACP. This exciting new issue honors both the service of the American Soldier and their legendary partnership with one of the most remarkable infantry weapons of the last hundred years. Craftsmen commissioned specifically by America Remembers decorate each working Thompson in sparkling 24-karat gold and nickel. Don't miss the opportunity to own a genuine Thompson built in the United States by the gunsmiths of the Auto-Ordnance Corporation, the company founded by Brigadier General John T. Thompson himself.

**Nothing else looked like the Thompson. Nothing else sounded like it. And Nothing ended a Firefight faster.**

The American Soldier carried the Thompson into every theater of World War II, from North Africa to the D-Day landings and from the frozen forests of Europe to the island-hopping campaigns of the Pacific. They relied on the trusty Thompson during the Korean War and the Thompson proved itself once again in the unforgiving jungle combat of Vietnam. Together the American Soldier and the Thompson were unstoppable. Together they made history.

**Once in a great while, a single firearm can change the face of war.**

During World War I, heavy, tripod-mounted machine guns pinned infantrymen in their trenches. Because frontal assaults were suicide missions, stalemates lasted for weeks, sometimes months. Retired Army General John T. Thompson wanted to devise a way to give the fight back for the foot soldier. He designed a weapon that could be used as an automatic "trench-broom" to sweep enemy trenches.

By the time America entered World War II, the Thompson was a trusted ally for the infantry. Once called "The deadliest weapon pound for pound, ever devised by man", it was the perfect weapon for the American soldier, who often engaged the enemy face-to-face. The Thompson gave them a huge advantage in close combat fighting and helped turn the tide of countless firefights. Its portability proved crucial to the soldier poking through the bombed out streets of Europe or during the beach landings at Normandy. Anywhere America's dedicated troops saw action you could hear the roar of the Thompson.



▼ On the left side, you'll find two scenes that show the soldier and the Thompson in action. The first scene shows infantrymen landing on the beach during the D-Day invasion. Dodging a hail of bullets and artillery shells, soldiers dragged the Thompson through seawater and sand. Once they reached enemy positions, the last thing they needed was a misfire. The trusty Thompson rarely let them down. Also featured is an outline of the U.S.A. with the words, "Freedom Forever," and a banner reading "Country Before Self," both honoring the selfless contributions of America's Soldiers. At the top center, a Soldier stands firing his Thompson.



▲ The right side features an illustration of a soldier taking aim with his Thompson and banners that read, "Saluting America's Soldiers" and "Defending Freedom". The rest of the action on the right side of the receiver depicts scenes during WWII and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In the North African campaign in WWII, soldiers wielded the Thompson alongside battle tanks during desert warfare. On the front lines in Korea, the soldiers distinguished themselves with the Thompson. Though the struggles and harsh conditions in Korea would push every soldier to the limit, the fighting spirit of America's soldiers carried on. In Vietnam, with helicopters in the background, soldiers relied on their Thompsons, often in the rice paddies and jungles. Though not as common in Vietnam, the Thompson was definitely welcomed by those on patrol or pinned down in a firefight.

**Model:** Thompson Semi-Automatic Submachine Gun 1927A-1 **Barrel Length:** 16 1/2" **Caliber:** .45 ACP

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Only 500 Tributes will be issued in this exclusive limited edition. Whether you served yourself, or want to honor some special someone who did, now is your opportunity to remember the courageous American Soldier, who has protected America's freedom for more than 235 years. We will arrange delivery of your working semi-automatic firearm through a licensed firearms dealer of your choice. If you are not 100% satisfied, you may return your Tribute to us in original unfired condition for a complete and courteous refund. (Not available in CA or CT).

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## End to AIDS in sight?

Calling a cure “entirely feasible,” a new United Nations report concludes that the foundation has been laid “for the eventual end of AIDS.”

The bold and optimistic projection is based on the international community’s success in arresting the spread of the disease, developing effective drug therapies, promoting prevention and delivering timely treatment to those infected.

Although an estimated 34 million people had HIV – the virus that causes AIDS – at the end of 2011, Reuters reports that the number of people “newly infected” with the disease is falling. At 2.5 million, the number of new infections in 2011 was 20 percent lower than in 2001. And deaths from AIDS fell to 1.7 million in 2011, from 2.3 million in 2005.

# Unsavorsaviors?

BY LANCE FRAZER

In the course of our history, humanity has developed some good natural defense mechanisms. But a longer life expectancy, increasing globalization, climate change and other factors have strengthened threats from cancer, heart disease and hostile bacteria, while microorganisms we thought we knew have adapted to the drugs in our arsenal. But new forms of help may be on the way.

**Clay** has been used as a medical treatment for more than 2,500 years, and Shelley Haydel, assistant professor at the Arizona State University School of Life Sciences, says a form of French clay has proven effective in lab tests against a variety of bacteria. She and colleague Lynda Williams tested clays against well-known bacteria such as *E. coli*, salmonella, MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) and others, with astonishing results: “In our tests, we went from a culture with 107 bacteria to zero in 24 hours,” Haydel says.

**Male American alligators** have been known to indulge in legendary turf wars that often leave one or both participants badly hurt. Yet despite living in environments rife with bacteria, they almost never develop infections, which intrigued McNeese State University researcher Mark Merchant. The gators’ secret weapon is a group of proteins in their blood that kill invading bacteria by rupturing their cell walls. Merchant is investigating the possibility that these proteins might be coaxed into doing the same thing for humans.

**The bite of the Southern copperhead** is not generally deadly to humans. But Francis Markland, a University of Southern California researcher, believes it might help humans put the bite on cancer. “One component of this venom works by blocking platelet aggregation,” he says. “We had the idea it might also work against

cancer cells by blocking the mechanism they use to attach onto normal cells.”

**The sea squirt** is a tube-like gelatinous-looking creature that clings to boat hulls, dock pilings, mangrove roots and just about anything else. But it packs a hidden punch, as University of Illinois researcher Ken Rinehart discovered when he realized that groups of sea squirts create dead zones around themselves. He isolated ecteinascidin, a substance that tests have revealed as effective against cancers that affect blood vessels, muscles, tendons and other connective tissue.

**The Gowanus Canal** in Brooklyn, N.Y., is an opaque waterway polluted with lead, oil, mercury, PCBs and other toxic chemicals. Yet New York City College of Technology researchers (and sisters) Nasreen and Niloufar Haque discovered that **microorganisms** in the canal thrive by adapting to an environment that should probably kill them, secreting a range of substances that protect them from other microorganisms in the water by functioning much like antibiotics in humans. Nasreen Haque believes these microbes are promising sources of antibiotics for use in treating human diseases.

**Chitosan, produced from the shells of shrimp and lobsters**, is being used by companies to trigger the rapid clotting of blood in serious injuries and reduce scarring. Meanwhile, **snake venoms** are being tested for their ability to dissolve blood clots.

*Lance Frazer is a Northern California-based writer specializing in health and medicine, nature, science and the environment.*



Media Bakery photos



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# Programs aim to help vets get job certification

BY TOM PHILPOTT

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters agreed a decade ago to work with states, the armed forces and The American Legion to help military truck drivers land good-paying jobs driving big rigs as civilians.

The hurdles have been high, says Elizabeth Murray-Belcaster, who consults on veterans issues for the Teamsters. For example, even if military driver training is comparable, commands often don't keep records on road hours or types of vehicles driven in ways that civilian employers or insurance companies understand and accept.

"Without that information they become noninsurable and nonbondable," Murray-Belcaster explains. "To drive a truck, especially a big freight or construction vehicle, employers have to be able to insure that driver. And without that verifiable information, there was a hardship for us to get those military drivers into those employers."

There have been some strides. Five years ago, the Teamsters offered vets a 200-hour training course for commercial license exams at no charge. Former military motor transport operators who demonstrate skills and experience can accelerate the completion of that course.

The Teamsters have also joined DoD in a new pilot program for credentialing and licensing that will be aggressive in lowering barriers for veterans. The focus is on industries critically short of trained applicants, including trucking, health care, supply and logistics, automotive repair and airplane mechanics.

"With the money and training that goes into their military service, if they separate and can't use that (military driver's) license, at some level we have all been fiscally irresponsible," Murray-Belcaster says. "Why would we train them twice when we can pull all the resources together to get them both military and civilian licenses? That's what we're trying to create with the pilot program – a best practice on how to transition or to sustain a license from military to civilian" occupations.

Frank DiGiovanni, DoD's director of training readiness and strategy, says a task force is working with employers, the services, and certification and licensing agencies on ways to better translate military skills for employers. The five occupational specialties chosen for the pilot, covering 16 military job specialties, are all projected to see steady job growth in the private sector.

What the pilot will determine is whether mili-

tary training satisfies civilian credentialing requirements and, if not, whether changes might make sense to fill the gaps to both satisfy industry and future employers, and make the military force more professional.

That focus on enhanced professionalism is key, says Steve Gonzalez, assistant director of the Legion's Economic Division, particularly as force

strength falls and readiness depends even more on individual skills and technology. Ten to 15 years ago, DoD leaders might have been anxious about making it too easy for servicemembers to transition to civilian life, fearing retention challenges.

"That has changed," Gonzalez says. "The smaller military force and technological advances (means) higher-level skill sets to operate a lot of the hardware. So you need to be on par with your civilian counterparts." Also, the services know that many members, upon leaving active duty, continue to serve in the Guard and reserve, making those units more professional through enhanced training received while on active duty.

DiGiovanni acknowledged that service leaders have expressed concern that the credentialing effort could make it too enticing to exit the military as the economy improves. But that worry is outweighed by the force's improved professionalism and the positive effect on recruiting, he says. There are also comprehensive programs to address retention with bonuses and other incentives.

*Tom Philpott, a former Coast Guardsman, has written about veterans and military personnel issues for more than 30 years.*



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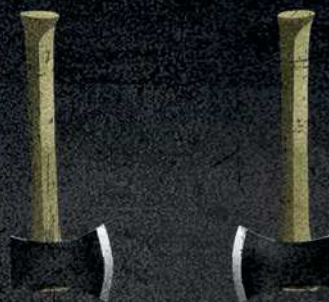




# A Case For *Civility*

*Today's partisan rancor is nothing new. But it's getting worse, as seen on the campaign trail, talk shows and the Internet. How do we bury the hatchet?*

**BY HENRY HOWARD**



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The walls of a conference room in former Sen. Richard Lugar's congressional office are adorned with testaments to a career of diplomacy, bipartisanship and civility. Framed photographs, in color and black and white, show Lugar mixing seriousness and friendliness with a who's who of late 20th century U.S. politicians: Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, both Bushes and, of course, former Sen. Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat.

If you did not know in advance, it would be difficult to tell to which political party Lugar belonged. The moderate Republican senator represented Indiana from 1977 until early this year.

Lugar's loss in the 2012 primary election serves as a striking example of the diminishing tone of civility in U.S. politics today. The primary, won by Tea Party-backed Richard Mourdock, included all the tactics deemed necessary for modern political warfare: negative campaign ads, inaccuracies, half-truths, character defamation and hostility in the media, particularly on the Internet.

In other words, incivility. Lots of incivility.

"One of the major positions taken against me in my re-election campaign was that I have been involved in too much bipartisan legislation," Lugar recalled as the sun set on his Senate career. "For example, the

Nunn-Lugar nuclear reduction program with Sam Nunn. Here, we worked for 20 years together. That legislation could not have happened without strong bipartisan support against very concerted opposition. There were people who said, 'We don't want to give the Russians a dime. Why in the world are you still fooling around with the Russians, even after 20 years?'"

Their effort ultimately led to the deactivation or destruction of more than 7,600 Russian warheads and thousands of intercontinental ballistic and nuclear missiles.

"The fact is that many people in the United States do not realize that for the better part of 40 years there were at least 10,000 to 13,000 nuclear warheads aimed at every city, every military installation in the United States," Lugar says. "There could have been a slip-up, an accident, a misorder or what have you. Mercifully, none of that happened. But when the START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) came up again last year, some Republicans said, 'There you go again. Talking to Democrats.'"

Lugar, now retired, is not the first victim of incivility between candidates. Nor will he be the last.

No matter the party or the issue, the intensity of today's multimedia political vitriol has risen to levels deemed unacceptable by

*Sleep not when others  
Speak, Sit not when  
others stand, Speak not  
when you Should hold  
your Peace, walk not on  
when others Stop.*

the public, political watchdogs and even some politicians.

In the wake of the slaughter of elementary school children and teachers in Sandy Hook, Conn., the nation again turns to the subjects of gun control and mental health.

Historically, gun control is an issue with little room for compromise. Those who passionately support the rights of gun owners point to the Second Amendment. On the other side, those encouraging tighter controls say something must be done to respond to senseless deaths – especially those of innocent children.

As the debate plays out, one thing is clear: Civil or uncivil, the words spoken and actions taken by government officials, their supporters and the media will determine whether the opposing sides can bury the hatchet and achieve a solution that won't incite further animosity or violence.

### Ground Zero in Arizona.

Gabrielle Giffords is among many current or former U.S. officials who have witnessed a downward spiral of civil discourse on Capitol Hill and Main Street. The former congresswoman from Arizona is still recovering from a January 2011 assassination attempt. While in office, the Democrat regularly and openly engaged her constituents whether or not she agreed with their opinions.

"Gabby felt the need to have communication with the people she represented," says her husband, Mark Kelly, a retired Navy captain and former space shuttle commander. "She

*Every Action done in  
Company, ought to be  
with Some Sign of  
Respect, to those that  
are Present.*

One of more than 100 statements in George Washington's "Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation," which he wrote at 16. The rules do not reflect modern English language and spelling, but their principles and meaning are timeless.



*Strive not with your  
Superiors in argument,  
but always Submit your  
Judgment to others with  
Modesty.*

welcomed people who had different opinions. Usually, they were really respectful, and she would listen to other people's opinions."

Such openness was part of growing up for Giffords, who was raised by a Democratic father and a Republican mother. "I learned about bipartisanship at the kitchen table," she has said.

During the national debate over President Barack Obama's health-care reform proposal, Giffords and her congressional office were subject to frequent hostility. Protesters gathered outside her Tucson office, jeering loudly and angrily. Some held signs, including ones that depicted Giffords as a scythe-carrying specter of death. After the vote – Giffords voted in favor of the bill – someone shot out the glass door and window of her office.

"We have had hundreds and hundreds of protesters over the course of the last several months," she told MSNBC at the time. "The rhetoric is incredibly heated – not just the calls, but the emails, the slurs."

Giffords also called for restraint. "We have to work out our problems by negotiating, working together ... Democrats and Republicans. I understand that this health-care bill is incredibly personal, probably the most significant vote cast here for decades, frankly. But the reality is that we've got to focus on the policy, focus on the process. Leaders – community leaders, not just political leaders – need to stand back when things get too fired up and say, 'Whoa, let's take a step back here.'"

On Jan. 8, 2011, less than a

year after Obama signed the controversial bill into law, Jared Lee Loughner

shot and killed six people and wounded 13, including Giffords, during one of her Congress on Your Corner events in Tucson.

It's impossible to know if Loughner was influenced by political animosity over the health-care issue, which was rampant on the Internet and talk media. It's certain, however, that the shooting brought to light the condition of civility in the United States today.

During a memorial for victims of the shooting, Obama addressed that condition:

"The loss of these wonderful people should make every one of us strive to be better – to be better friends and neighbors and co-workers and parents. And if, as has been discussed in recent days, their deaths help usher in more civility in our public discourse, let us remember it is not because a simple lack of civility caused this tragedy – it did not – but rather because only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to the challenges of our nation in a way that would make them proud."

Kelly has witnessed, through his wife's political career, how incivility – broken office windows, cruel phone calls, threatening emails, violence – builds tension in society and ultimately blocks progress.

"If you move the needle on political rhetoric toward the good, it affects everything," he says. "It's one of the rare things that you can do

that has an impact on every policy ... education, health care, military spending. It affects everything. If you could improve everything, why wouldn't you?"

But even with a renewed focus on incivility, a caustic atmosphere has prevailed.

Many argued that Teamsters President James P. Hoffa crossed the civility line when he introduced Obama on Labor Day 2011 to a crowd, mostly made up of union supporters, by howling: "President Obama, this is your army. We are ready to march. Everybody here's got to vote. Let's take these sons of bitches out."

Two years earlier, Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., had stunned fellow members of Congress and a nationwide audience by shouting, "You lie!" as Obama outlined his health-care plans.

**The Early Days.** Incivility is, of course, older than the United States itself.

George Washington was 16 when he addressed the issue by writing a list of more than 100 statements encouraging proper social behavior. Consider this excerpt from "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation" by the father of our nation:

*"If two contend together take not the part of either unconstrained; and be not obstinate in your own Opinion, in Things indifferent be of the Major Side."*

Differences of opinion defined the Washington administration. The first

U.S. president stocked his Cabinet with leaders of the revolution, and

*Do not laugh too loud  
or too much at any  
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the primary task of the infant nation was generating revenue to cover domestic and foreign debt from the war. Two of Washington's closest advisers – Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson – supported contrasting solutions, and built opposing factions that later evolved into political parties. (Notably, Washington never joined a party.)

The Hamilton-Jefferson squabbles about foreign and domestic issues became so intense that the two eventually refused to cooperate at all, which split the administration. Washington, who often had to resolve their disputes, underscored the need for civility as he left the presidency.

The spirit of partisanship would make “public administration the mirror of the ill-conceived and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by the common counsels and modified by mutual interests,” Washington said.

Incivility had already embedded itself into American culture when John Adams succeeded Washington. “Every aspect of American life – business groups, banks, dance assemblies, even funerals – became politicized,” U.S. historian Bernard Bailyn wrote. “People who had known each other their whole lives now crossed streets to avoid meeting. As personal and social ties fell apart, differences easily spilled into violence, and fighting broke out in the state

*When you see a Crime punished, you may be inwardly Pleased; but always shew Pity to the Suffering Offender.*

legislatures and even in Congress.”

After Washington left office, his rules of civility –

including “*Use no Reproachfull Language against any one neither Curse nor Revile*” – continued to be trampled. Jefferson was cast as the antichrist. Andrew Jackson was referred to as the son of a prostitute. Abraham Lincoln was called a “baboon.”

Perhaps the most outlandish example of incivility in Congress followed the 1856 “Bleeding Kansas” speech by Massachusetts Sen. Charles Sumner. On the floor, Sumner railed against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which called for creating the two territories and would allow them to decide independently whether to allow slavery.

Sumner argued for admitting Kansas as a free state. Days later, a representative from South Carolina physically attacked Sumner at his desk in the Senate chamber. He suffered head damage so severe it would today have been diagnosed as a traumatic brain injury.

Lincoln recognized the nation’s figurative bleeding and understood that the United States’ future was at stake. In 1858, he called for an end to it. “A house divided against itself cannot stand,” he proclaimed. “I believe this government cannot endure, permanently

half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved – I do not expect the house to fall – but I do expect it will cease to be divided.”

While the Civil War era has no parallel among historical low points in U.S. public discord, no time period is immune from incivility.

“Animosity in Congress is nothing new,” says Matt Purushotham, vice president of programs at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress (CSPC). “Everyone thinks the current time is the worst time. I think it’s a matter of intellectual dishonesty. My perception is that people are more polite in their speech nowadays, but their willingness to say things with a straight face that are misleading or intellectually dishonest is greater. When people were actually getting into fistfights in Congress, there was actually an authenticity to the positions they were defending.”

**Behind Closed Doors.** There is often a big difference between heated public debate among politicians and the private negotiations they conduct to achieve results. For example, it was not unusual for 20th century campaigns to be mired in partisan protocol, but once the ballots were counted and

the winners sworn into office, the hatchets were usually buried so that the job of running a government could be conducted.

“In every campaign, you see character

*When Another Speaks be attentive your Self and disturb not the Audience. If any hesitate in his Words help him not nor Prompt him without desired. Interrupt him not, nor Answer him till his Speech be ended.*

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## HOW TO REPAIR OUR NATION'S

# State of Discourse

While in office, Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., prioritized border security and working across party lines. She collaborated with Ted Poe, a Republican from Texas, on the issue and even brought him to her district so he could see the effects of illegal border crossings on Arizona. Their work together left an impression on Poe.

Following Giffords' decision to leave Congress, Poe said, "She embodies the spirit of bipartisanship that we should all learn from. Gabby never made decisions based on her party. To her, it has always been about what is right for the people."

In the aftermath of Giffords' shooting in January 2011, new efforts to promote civility and bipartisanship have taken shape, including the establishment of the National Institute for Civil Discourse at the University of Arizona.

The institute's mission statement describes it as a "nonpartisan center for advocacy, research and policy regarding civil discourse consistent with First Amendment principles."

The institute's two honorary chairmen are former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Its board members include representatives of both major political parties, including former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Colin Powell, former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and former Sen. Alan Simpson.

Whatever motivated Jared Lee Loughner to go on his murderous rampage in Tucson, the act reverberated throughout communities nationwide because of the setting: an open forum where differences of opinion were welcomed.

"One of the things most disturbing to me about the shooting was that people had gathered on an American street corner to do what our founding fathers wanted: participate in democracy," says Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, executive director of the institute. "To have such a tragic outcome in that moment of time did serve as a real wake-up call in terms of what we've all recognized: that politics and civil discussion has been on the decline for some time."

Former Sen. Olympia Snowe witnessed the decline of decorum during her congressional career, which began in 1979 and concluded in 2012. She decided last year not to seek re-election, citing worsening incivility.

"Now the difference is that colleagues are willing to take it to the edge," says the Maine Republican. "Now, it has become a system not within the institution but outside. It's not about the best interests of the country

but the best political interests of the political parties."

Snowe points to the debt ceiling impasse as a time when partisanship and incivility nearly caused a crisis.

"We were prepared to orchestrate political

brinksmanship when the country was at its worst," she recalls. "My obligation as a public servant was to maintain the public trust. Here we were risking the country at a time when the American people needed the highest leadership possible, and they got the opposite."

To restore a more civil climate allowing for the people's business to progress unimpeded, politicians, voters and the media all have a role to play.

"I'm convinced that civility has to be restored for democracy to work," Lukensmeyer says. "My experience with the general public is that if they are willing to focus on an issue and

organize, they do get heard. I'm hopeful this will get turned around. But it will require public demands, a change in politics, a change in politicians' behavior and a helping hand from the media."

The institute's goals address three key areas:

**Congress.** The institute aims to create rewards and incentives for candidates, public officials and media representatives who commit to civil discourse.

**The public.** First, people need to assess themselves and how they are engaging with others, Lukensmeyer says. Second, they need to stand up and speak out when they see something disturbing. "People should speak up when they see incivility. They should be assertive about speaking out when they see a candidate being uncivil, when they see television coverage that is offensive."

**The media.** Fragmentation of the media is contributing to the problem, Lukensmeyer says. Her organization wants to influence changes in the media in how campaigns are covered.

In retirement, Snowe says she will continue to encourage civility. Among her plans: assist the institute in spreading its message, author a book and continue to speak publicly.

"We can have our differences," Snowe says. "It's how we work through those differences in a civil way that defines us."

— Henry Howard



Gabrielle Giffords

Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chad J. McNeelley

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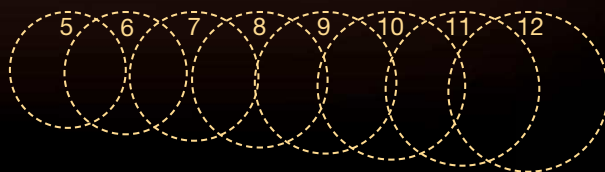
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assassination and politically charged lies,” says Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, executive director of the University of Arizona-based National Institute for Civil Discourse. “People who track these things will tell you that traditionally incivility showed up in the campaign cycle but then faded to the background during governing. Think back to Ronald Reagan. He worked with Tip O’Neill and Bill Bradley to create tax reform.”

It would be challenging to find two politicians whose beliefs were as polar-opposite as the Democratic House speaker and the Republican president. Both chided each other publicly, but behind closed doors, they cooperated.

“The Reagan-O’Neill relationship was really a prime example (of what worked),” says Jonathan Murphy, director of external relations for CSPC. “Reagan did it best. He knew he didn’t have to be on the front lines. He didn’t have to be on the front page of the paper.”

The media landscape is quite different today. Now, tomorrow’s front-page news is analyzed today online and in real time through blogs and social media. Sound bites start flying on Capitol Hill before issues are fully digested.

“A word that has been lost in the language is ‘colloquy,’” Murphy says. “People used to talk about how you’d come down to the floor and speak together about an issue. You’d have time. Now there is such a sense of urgency, such a sense to react. People in the past have been willing to take a step back for a second and see what the big picture is. We just

## EXAMPLES OF

## *incivility*

**“They say it’s a government takeover of health care, a big lie just like Goebbels. You say it enough, you repeat the lie, you repeat the lie, and eventually, people believe it. Like blood libel. That’s the same kind of thing.”** – U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn.

**“Dr. Laura: don’t retreat ... reload!”** – Sarah Palin, the GOP’s 2008 vice presidential nominee, in a Twitter message supporting Dr. Laura Schlessinger, a talk radio host who apologized and decided to retire after using the n-word on the air 11 times in five minutes in 2010

**“I am not afraid of anybody. This is a tough game. You can’t be intimidated. You can’t be frightened. And as far as I’m concerned, the Tea Party can go straight to hell.”** – U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif.

**“I do know that it’s true that if you wanted to reduce crime, you could – if that were your sole purpose – you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down.”** – Conservative pundit, politician and author Bill Bennett

need to learn those lessons from strong leaders like the Tip O’Neills and the Reagans who have been willing to jump over any obstacles that have been in the way.”

**What’s at Stake.** KRC Research has been measuring civility in the United States with annual surveys since 2010. The most recent, completed in April 2012, queried 1,000 adults. Among the findings:

- 81 percent of respondents say incivility in government is harming the nation’s future.
- 63 percent believe there is a major civility problem in the United States.
- 55 percent expect civility to worsen, while 14 percent said it would improve. Comparatively, the 2010 survey showed 39 percent expected civility to worsen, while 26 percent believed it would get better.

Incivility also prevents elected leaders from addressing major issues. Take, for example, the brouhaha over the debt ceiling bill in 2011. After

months of partisan posturing, a deal was struck to slice the debt and avoid default. While a serious crisis was averted, the aftermath had its victims – including the military, which remains dutifully stoic in most political battles.

“The sequestration and military budget overall is a potential victim and a very conspicuous one,” Lugar said in the months before automatic reductions were set to kick in. “We’re in this situation because sequestration came about due to the inability for people to talk to each other about budgets and taxes at a time when the country reached a debt ceiling.”

But during that tumultuous time, the nastiness momentarily took a back seat as Giffords returned unannounced to vote. When she entered the House chamber, tears, hugs and applause all flowed freely from Democrats and Republicans alike.

“Finally, nobility,” remarked *The Record*, a newspaper in



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**Dennis Crystal, Troy, MT (Retired Airline Pilot)**

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going to purchase these heaters for their homes this winter.  
**Gloria D. Smith, Boynton, VA (Retired Elementary Principal)**

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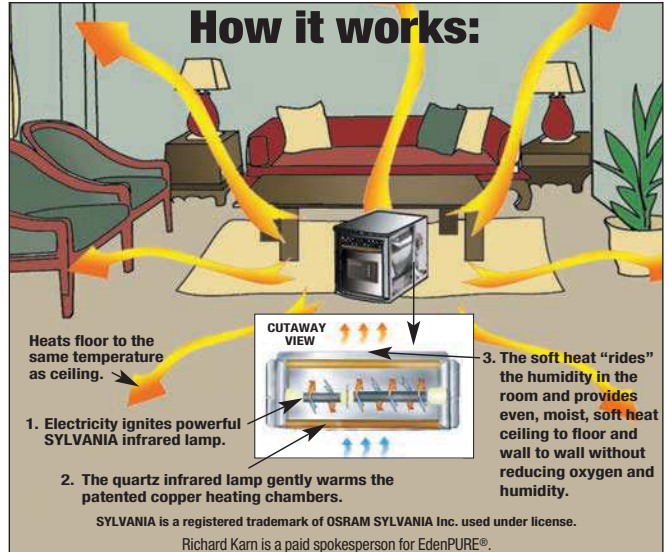
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northern New Jersey. "After months of rancor and pettiness, one small woman brought Washington to its feet. Her 'yes' vote did not affect the outcome; the bill passed by a wide margin. But for a few minutes, it changed the tenor of the debate. For that, America should be grateful."

The editorial continued: "Without speaking and without fiery rhetoric, she brought all of us to the same conclusion: This nation is worthy of personal sacrifice. We can compromise on how we fund America; we cannot compromise on how we define America. That definition does not require words. Just look at Gabrielle Giffords."

**The Power of Negative Advertising.** Candidates place negative ads because they work, says Shanto Iyengar, professor of political science at Stanford University. "The data show that the whole reason for the negative ads is that the news media are much more likely to cover bad news than good news. Planes that land safely don't ordinarily make the news."

Furthermore, negative ads stick in the minds of voters. "Negative ads are more effective than positive ads," Iyengar says. "They are more likely to be remembered by viewers." He cites two ads that impacted presidential elections:

■ In the 2004 presidential race, ads disputing the Vietnam War record of Democratic challenger John Kerry gave birth to the term "swiftboating" in a political, rather than military,

*Associate yourself with  
Men of good Quality if  
you Esteem your own  
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better to be alone than  
in bad Company.*

context. "It was inaccurate, only based on recollections," Iyengar says. "The next day ... there were more than 500 news reports about the Swift Boat ad." Navy records and personnel who served with Kerry later contradicted allegations that he had overinflated his record, but the damage to his campaign had already been done.

■ In 1964, an ad titled "Daisy" aired just once, but that was enough to carry the message across to voters that Republican challenger Barry Goldwater would start a nuclear war. The ad began with a 2-year-old girl counting as she pulled petals off a daisy, then transitioned to an ominous voice counting down from 10, and ended with an atomic explosion. A voice-over ended the ad with "Vote for President (Lyndon) Johnson on Nov. 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home."

**The Moment of Truth.** Politicians or politically charged groups dish out incivility. The media respond by delivering that incivility to the masses. The masses consume it, and bitter debate follows.

That pattern played out in Indiana last year. Mourdock's bid for the Senate seat was swept away after he seemed to suggest that pregnancies from rape are ordained by God. Mourdock's comment, made during a late October debate, quickly spread via the Internet and talk

radio. The debate turned a "too-close-to-call" race into a comfortable win for Democratic candidate Joe Donnelly.

There's nothing to indicate this pattern is likely to change soon. Occasional calls for bipartisanship are trumped by today's outside influences.

"(Today's) politicians need to remember, 'What is my role once I've been elected?'" Lukensmeyer says. "We have never before seen such a sustained period when there is no movement on the big issues of today."

Lugar believes that if lawmakers continue to squabble in the mud and leave major issues of the day to languish, public opinion of congressional leaders will continue to decline until an economic or national security crisis occurs, such as massive tax increases, unemployment and military vulnerability resulting from the impasse over deficit reduction.

It's all coming to a head, Lugar says. "My guess is that there will be a public revolt that will be very substantial. I'm not certain which party will benefit. But I would not be at all surprised if the congressional elections in 2014 went very sharply one way or the other. I'm confident that one party or another will suffer in this process. A lot of incumbents will be voted out as the public has an opportunity.

That's a tough price to pay." 🍂

Henry Howard is deputy director of magazine operations for The American Legion Magazine.

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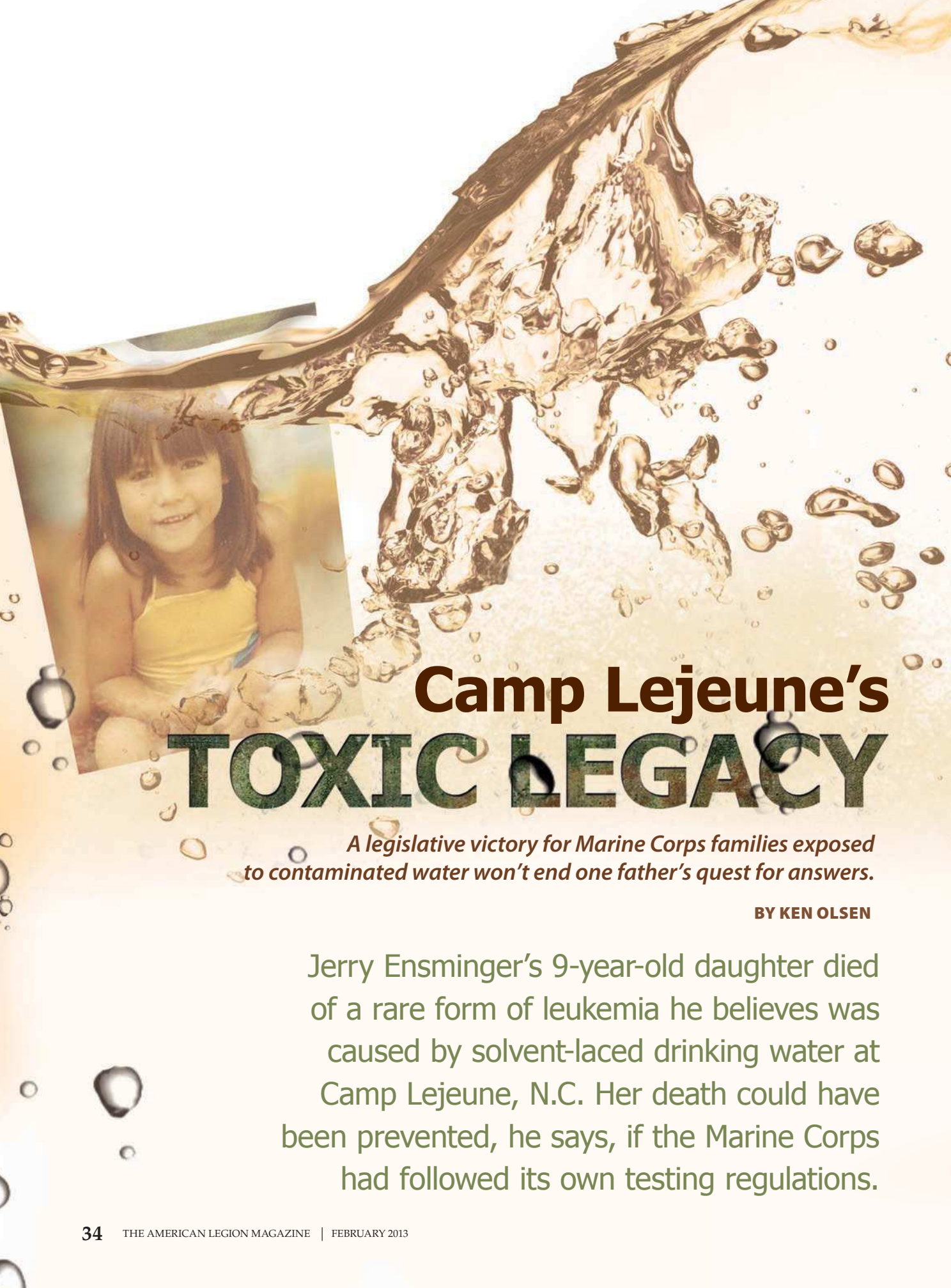
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# Camp Lejeune's TOXIC LEGACY

*A legislative victory for Marine Corps families exposed to contaminated water won't end one father's quest for answers.*

**BY KEN OLSEN**

Jerry Ensminger's 9-year-old daughter died of a rare form of leukemia he believes was caused by solvent-laced drinking water at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Her death could have been prevented, he says, if the Marine Corps had followed its own testing regulations.

"I have never been so disillusioned in my life," says Ensminger, who served 11 of his 25 years in the Marine Corps at the base. "I want the truth. I want accountability. And I fully recognize they will probably pat me in the face with a shovel and blow Taps over me before I get that."

Ensminger can claim partial victory in his 15-year battle over contamination at Camp Lejeune, where drinking water was tainted with five times as much trichloroethylene (TCE) as the Woburn, Mass., drinking water system made famous in the book and movie "A Civil Action." Congress recently mandated that VA provide health care for Marines and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune between 1957 and 1987 who are suffering from certain cancers and neurological diseases.

"This bill is confirmation by the president of the United States and Congress that we were harmed by our leaders," he says.

But the plainspoken former drill instructor and father of four is not standing down. "This is not the end of the issue – this is the end of the first act," Ensminger says. "They are still withholding information from Congress and the public. There has been no accountability for the people who perpetrated this on us and our families."

**Record Exposure.** The Marine Corps acknowledges that as many as 800,000 Marines, family members and civilians drank, swam and showered in Camp Lejeune's toxin-laden water, the largest exposure of its kind in the nation.

Established as an advanced training base in 1941, the 246-square-mile complex relied on dozens of shallow wells, averaging 40 feet deep, for drinking water. These wells were contaminated by leaking fuel-storage tanks, a chemical dump and discarded industrial solvents. One well was even installed in a corner of a Camp Lejeune landfill where solvents, DDT and other waste was

discarded. A civilian dry cleaner near the Camp Lejeune family housing complex where Ensminger lived also polluted the drinking water.

The Marine Corps says the contamination was the unintentional byproduct of an era when federal law didn't limit the amount of toxins – including tetrachloroethylene (PCE), TCE, benzene and vinyl chloride – in drinking water.

"In the early 1980s, standards and regulations for the treatment and disposal of solvents were just starting to be put into place," the Corps said in an email response to questions about Camp Lejeune. "The understanding of health effects of these chemicals has evolved. For example, up until 1977, TCE was allowed for use as a general anesthetic, skin wound and surgical disinfectant."

Health experts call the Marine Corps' response disingenuous.

"Hiding behind the lack of an official regulation doesn't fulfill its moral obligation to the Marines and their families," says Richard Clapp, an epidemiologist at the Boston University School of Public Health, who specializes in causes of cancer in workers, community residents and veterans. Massachusetts voluntarily closed two Woburn wells in 1979 after tests revealed a far lower TCE contamination level than that at Camp Lejeune, even though the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hadn't yet set drinking water limits on the carcinogen.

"That was based on guidance from EPA and not a formal regulation, but it was done to protect the public health based on evidence available at the time," Clapp says. "I see no reason why the Department of the Navy could not have done the same thing to protect its people."

The medical community, meanwhile, abandoned TCE as an anesthetic because it was lethal. "It was causing people to go into heart failure on the operating table," Clapp says. "That should have sent up a red flag about TCE exposure in the late 1970s as well."



**"I Had to Be Strong."** Ensminger first went to Camp Lejeune after he graduated from boot camp in 1970. He and his wife lived in a Marine Corps family housing complex called Tarawa Terrace from 1973 to 1975. One of their daughters, Janey, was conceived and carried through most of her first trimester at Camp Lejeune. That timing is key. A developing fetus is so sensitive to the chemicals that were present in Camp Lejeune's water, Clapp says, that a few hours or days of exposure at the wrong time could cause birth defects, cancers or neurological diseases. There was an eightfold increase in the risk of childhood leukemia among Woburn, Mass., babies whose mothers were exposed to the TCE-contaminated water during pregnancy.

Ensminger and his family returned to Camp Lejeune in 1982, and lived in nearby Jacksonville, N.C. The town had little in the way of community recreation facilities, so his daughters regularly swam in the base swimming pools. Because TCE and the other contaminants can be absorbed through the skin, the pools were just one more source of potential exposure.

Janey Ensminger was diagnosed with childhood leukemia in July 1983. She was 6.

"At first I went into shock," Ensminger says. "Then it was the hustle and bustle of getting her to a treatment facility."

They took Janey to Penn State University Medical Center and Duke Children's Hospital, searching for a cure and answers. No one in his or his wife's family had ever had cancer. Janey's illness didn't make sense.

"After I had a chance to sit down and think about it, the question was why," Ensminger says. "But these doctors couldn't – or wouldn't – answer my nagging question."

Ensminger told Janey they would fight her cancer together. He told himself that he wouldn't cry in front of his daughter. "I had to be strong," he says.

"Every time that child went into a treatment room, she was screaming, 'Daddy, Daddy, don't let them hurt me,'" Ensminger says. He finally broke down in front of his daughter in late September 1985. Janey told him she loved him, lapsed into a coma and died 30 minutes later.

"I didn't just lose my daughter. I feel like I lost my entire life," Ensminger says.

**A Secondary Concern.** Why didn't the Marine Corps begin testing drinking water for total organic pollutants – a class of chemicals including

TCE, PCE, benzene and other toxins – in 1963, as Navy regulations required?

The Corps says such testing wouldn't have made a difference because those early regulations didn't require specific analysis for TCE, PCE and other toxins. Indeed, the appropriate analytical tools weren't readily available or commonly used by water utilities in the early 1960s.

But even if the Marine Corps hadn't identified the specific contaminants, those early tests would have alerted officials to a significant pollution problem and prevented decades of human exposure to solvents and other dangerous chemicals, Ensminger says. At a minimum, the Corps would have discovered that Camp Lejeune's Hadnot Point Fuel Farm was leaking, eventually allowing as much as 1 million gallons of petroleum to seep into the soil and groundwater.

There is other evidence to suggest that camp commanders were slow to act. Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974 after a national outcry over water pollution. Even the magazine *Civil Engineering* – hardly a staple of the environmental movement – published a cover story in September 1977 headlined, "Are U.S. cities doing enough to remove cancer-causing chemicals from drinking water?" By then, Camp Lejeune had the third-largest municipal water system in North Carolina and was obligated to meet federal drinking water standards.

An Army analytical lab was finally tapped to test Camp Lejeune's water in 1980, as required under the Safe Drinking Water Act. It alerted the base several times to high levels of drinking water pollution that were interfering with its analysis, although the lab didn't identify specific contaminants. Two years later, a private lab also found dangerously high levels of toxins while conducting similar water sampling. In fact, the water was so contaminated that Grainger Labs assumed it had gotten bad samples. It repeated the tests several times in May 1982 and discovered dangerously high levels of TCE and other solvents.

"I was alarmed," says Mike Hargett, then co-owner of the lab. "By 1982, the toxicological impact of TCE and PCE exposure was well-established. They should not have been drinking that water."

Hargett took his concerns to Camp Lejeune officials, and even met with the officer in charge of the water utility – an individual whose name he no longer recalls. "I said, 'This is not something you want to expose the population to,'" Hargett says. "He dismissed me, saying, 'This is something we will turn over to the Navy.'"







Camp Lejeune continued to use the contaminated wells for another two and a half years. As a result, water supplied to parts of the base by the Hadnot Point treatment plant contained as much as 1,400 parts per billion of TCE. That's the highest level of the solvent recorded in a municipal drinking water system in the United States, and 280 times today's TCE limit.

But the Marine Corps says the source of the pollution was unknown. It also cites the lack of limits on solvents in drinking water as a reason it didn't take immediate action. In addition, it's difficult to second-guess decisions made decades ago. "Although it is impossible to know why a discretionary action was or was not taken more than 25 years ago, one must view the situation in the context of the relevant time period," the Marine Corps says.

Camp Lejeune finally began closing its highly contaminated wells in late 1984. Even then, the base newspaper mentioned only "trace contamination" and did not warn of any potential health effects. A letter the Marine Corps sent to Tarawa Terrace residents in April 1985 mentioned "minute (trace) amounts of several organic chemicals in the drinking water," but most of the letter focused on water conservation required by the well closures.

This lackluster response is puzzling for other reasons. The Navy shuttered contaminated water wells at other bases well before Camp Lejeune finally took action. Naval Air Station Willow Grove and Naval Air Warfare Center Warminster – both in Pennsylvania – closed contaminated wells in 1979, according to records Ensminger unearthed.

Hargett's firm found lower concentrations of contamination in the drinking water at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina in the early 1980s. Hargett notified Cherry Point's water system manager, who immediately shut down the offending well because the person in charge of the utility "understood the severity of the problem," he says.

The difference, Hargett believes, is that the problem didn't come to the attention of the right person at Camp Lejeune until late 1984. "I don't think they had the right information or understanding of the problem," he says. A field commander is concerned about having enough water for his troops to bathe, drink and do the work he needs to do. "The details of what was in that water were a secondary concern." That mentality carried over to the water utility at Camp Lejeune.

## 'We were at a loss to explain how this happened to me'

A hug saved Mike Partain's life.

His ex-wife felt a lump in his right breast in April 2007 and encouraged him to see a doctor. A month later he had a mastectomy, and something of an identity crisis.

"I went from being a normal father of a family of four to being diagnosed with male breast cancer," says Partain, who was then 39. He doesn't smoke, drink or have a family history of cancer. Genetic tests for the breast cancer gene were negative. "We were at a loss to explain how this happened to me."

Partain got an inkling when he turned on the TV in June 2007. He watched Jerry Ensminger testify at a congressional hearing about decades of drinking water contamination at Camp Lejeune and the resulting potential health problems.

"I had my answer as to why I was sick," says Partain, an insurance claims adjuster in Tallahassee, Fla. He was born at Camp Lejeune in 1968.

Partain joined Ensminger in digging through records. For nine months, he worked evenings and weekends to construct a comprehensive timeline of the contamination, which is now posted on the website of The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten, [www.tftptf.com](http://www.tftptf.com).

Partain also spread the word about the potential link between male breast cancer and exposure to tainted drinking water at Camp Lejeune, speaking everywhere from churches to Marine Corps League meetings, and lobbying newspapers to write about the issue. He heard from dozens of men from across the country, all of whom had two things in common: male breast cancer and exposure to Camp Lejeune's contaminated drinking water.

Partain and Ensminger have a list of more than 80 names of men with breast cancer. As a result, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry plans an epidemiological study of male breast cancer among Camp Lejeune residents.

In addition, Congress mandated VA health care for former residents with certain cancers and neurological diseases last summer.

"Seeing the president sign our bill into law did a lot to restore my faith in my country," he says.



Photo by Colin Hackley



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# 'We're not going to stop'

From Marine Corps Air Station El Toro in California to Fort McClellan, Ala., there are nearly 140 U.S. military bases on the federal government's roster of toxic waste sites.

This is a significant issue for veterans, says Jim Deremo, The American Legion's department service officer in North Dakota. The drinking water was polluted at many of these bases. "I think a huge number may be suffering from health problems because of their exposure to these chemicals," he says. "The whole issue has been and continues to be a well-kept secret, so not many veterans know about it."

In 2010, a county veterans service officer asked for Deremo's help with the case of a Marine stationed at El Toro in the early 1950s. Ray Alkofer was suffering from a nervous system disease called multiple system atrophy. "Essentially, his body shut down and he was bedridden for quite some time before he passed," Deremo says. "There's no question Ray's illness was caused by his exposure to all of the chemicals at El Toro."

The Navy identified more than two dozen potentially contaminated areas, including landfills, underground storage tanks, pits where jet fuel and paint thinner were burned for firefighting practice, and aircraft hangars where used solvents such as trichloroethylene (TCE) were dumped.

Alkofer served at El Toro from 1951 to 1953, says his widow, Laura. Although his official job was in communications, he also cleaned airplanes and did other work around El Toro's hangars. After his discharge, he came home to North Dakota and worked for the railroad and the telephone company.

Alkofer started experiencing medical problems in 2000, and went from being active in his community to bedridden. "You name it, he did it," Laura says. "Community theater – he was in every musical. He was an EMT and a member of the fire department for 25 years. He was active in American Legion Post 147, Lions Club and Knights of Columbus."

With Deremo's help, Alkofer filed a VA claim based on his exposure to toxins, but it was denied. "I was ready to give up," Laura says. "Jim said, 'No, we're not going to stop.'" They appealed, and Alkofer received a 100 percent disability rating in March 2011. He died seven months later.

"The last year of his life was sad for him," Laura says. "It bothered him that he'd been exposed by the Marine Corps."

A few months later, Deremo was helping file a claim for

Richard Bounds, who served at El Toro from 1974 to 1976. Bounds says he became so ill while building a fence around a vehicle dry dock that he requested barracks duty.

Bounds first developed serious organ failure about a decade after he left El Toro, even though he has no family history of such medical problems. That led to kidney and liver transplants in 2007. Bounds' VA claim was approved late last year, thanks to Deremo and Steele County veterans service officer Dennis Kubischta, and he also now has a 100 percent service-connected disability for toxic exposure.

Veterans who served at other contaminated bases haven't fared as well. Sue Frasier has been unsuccessful in her fight for a national health registry for veterans who served at Fort McClellan between 1935 and 1999. Frasier went through basic training in 1970, when the base was home to the Army Chemical Corps and the Women's Army Corps. Nearby Anniston had a chemical plant that manufactured PCBs.

"Nobody told us about the contamination level," Frasier says. "There were factories all over America in those days – it was hard to get a sense of the danger."

Frasier developed respiratory and gastrointestinal problems as well as chloracne while on active duty. Chloracne would later be one of several diseases tied to Agent Orange exposure.

Frasier's health problems continued after her discharge in 1972 and forced her to retire from her civilian job at 41. VA rejected Frasier's disability claim several times. She sold her car, her house and her furniture to pay her bills, she says.

Today Frasier runs the Fort McClellan Veterans Stakeholder Group. At her urging, Rep. Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., has introduced legislation to create a national health registry for veterans whose medical problems may be related to chemical exposure during their service at Fort McClellan. The bill has never left committee, but Frasier remains determined.

"We want a universal notification form, sent out on Army or VA letterhead, telling veterans the truth about where they were stationed," she says. "Something with substance, that includes a detailed account of what they were exposed to. Veterans should not have to rely on public rumors, Internet activists and storytelling to find out what happened at Anniston, Ala."



Photo by Ron Azevedo, [www.ronazevedo.com](http://www.ronazevedo.com)

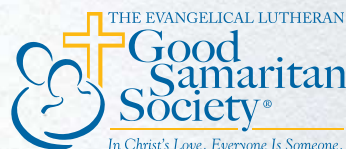




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## Resources and more information

VA has posted information about health care for former Camp Lejeune residents who are dealing with certain cancers and other illnesses.

 [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune)

The Marine Corps website on Camp Lejeune contamination allows people to sign up for information updates.

 [cldr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater/index.aspx](http://cldr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater/index.aspx)

The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten has a comprehensive timeline of the Camp Lejeune contamination, as well as government source documents and the stories of several people who lived on the base.

 [tftptf.com](http://tftptf.com)

The documentary “Semper Fi: Always Faithful” examines the Camp Lejeune contamination from the viewpoint of Marines and their families.

 [semperfialwaysfaithful.com](http://semperfialwaysfaithful.com)

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has posted information on its work at Camp Lejeune and at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro.

 [www.atsdr.cdc.gov](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov)

**Haunted By Questions.** In the summer of 1997, almost 12 years after his daughter died, Jerry Ensminger heard a TV news report that said Camp Lejeune’s drinking water had been contaminated with solvents potentially linked to childhood leukemia. “It was like God had opened up the sky and said, ‘Jerry, here is a possible answer to the nagging question that has plagued you,’” he says.

By then, Ensminger had retired from the Marines as a master sergeant and was raising corn and soybeans not far from Camp Lejeune. He started a group called The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten and began digging for answers. Tom Townsend, a former Marine whose son mysteriously died six weeks after his birth at Camp Lejeune, joined Ensminger. Townsend filed more than a thousand requests for Marine Corps and Navy records under the federal Freedom of Information Act.

Townsend’s health later forced him to step aside. But Mike Partain, the son of a Camp Lejeune Marine, heard about Ensminger’s work and stepped up. Partain was born at Camp

Lejeune in 1968, had just undergone a radical mastectomy for a rare case of male breast cancer and was likewise searching for answers. He dedicated nine months to sorting the records Townsend and Ensminger had obtained and constructing a detailed timeline of Camp Lejeune’s contamination.

Ensminger and his volunteers pored through hundreds of documents, including copies of emails that showed that the Marine Corps considered postponing the release of information about drinking water contamination at Camp Lejeune, as well as a health survey, because the movie version of “A Civil Action” was about to hit theaters. Such timing would bring unwanted attention to the problems at the base, one Camp Lejeune official worried.

Ensminger, meanwhile, made countless trips to Capitol Hill. He’s testified before the House and Senate five times. In 2008, he successfully lobbied Congress to order the Marine Corps to formally notify former Marines, family members and civilians about the Camp Lejeune water contamination. Ensminger scored another victory last August when President Barack Obama signed legislation mandating VA health care for former Camp Lejeune residents. However, there are concerns about how long it will take VA to begin providing care to families.

Ensminger continues his fight for comprehensive epidemiological studies of the people who lived and worked at Camp Lejeune, and is worried about ongoing delays in the release of the results. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry was expected to publish two studies in July: an analysis of birth defects among Camp Lejeune residents and a historical reconstruction of their exposure to contaminated drinking water. The historical reconstruction is particularly important, he says, since it’s the foundation for future Camp Lejeune health studies.

Most of all, Ensminger tries to make sense of the profound betrayal he and others feel from an institution he served and revered – and to answer the questions that still haunt them, such as how and why.

“We still don’t have the whole truth about what happened to us and our families,” Ensminger says. “Janey’s dead. Nothing’s going to help her. But there are other people out there who are still suffering.” 🌿

*Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.*

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# ‘I had to go to the library to look it up’

*In the mid-’50s, Frank Kowalski and hundreds of other soldiers were ordered to a largely unheard-of country called Vietnam.*

BY KEN OLSEN

The Pentagon didn’t acknowledge Frank Kowalski’s tour in Southeast Asia for more than 40 years. Some of his fellow veterans still don’t.

Kowalski was handed orders for Vietnam on his 19th birthday in September 1955 and told nothing else about his surprise new assignment. Six weeks later, he received a top security clearance and \$200 to buy tourist clothes. “Trying to buy summer wear in November is a little difficult,” he jokes. He soon flew to Travis Air Force Base in California to begin an eight-day island hop across the Pacific in a turboprop military transport.

When he arrived in Vietnam shortly before Christmas, Kowalski stashed his uniform and donned the slacks and short-sleeve shirt the Army ordered him to wear. During his first night in Saigon, he was assaulted by a group of rock-throwing Vietnamese while returning to his apartment across from the Metropole Hotel. A dental technician stitched up his head.

Kowalski was with Tech Sgt. Richard Fitzgibbon Jr. when he was killed by a fellow airman on June 8, 1956. More than 40 years later, Fitzgibbon became the earliest U.S. casualty etched into the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. The publicity surrounding that event enabled Kowalski to meet Fitzgibbon’s daughter and tell her about the father she barely knew. (Fitzgibbon’s son,

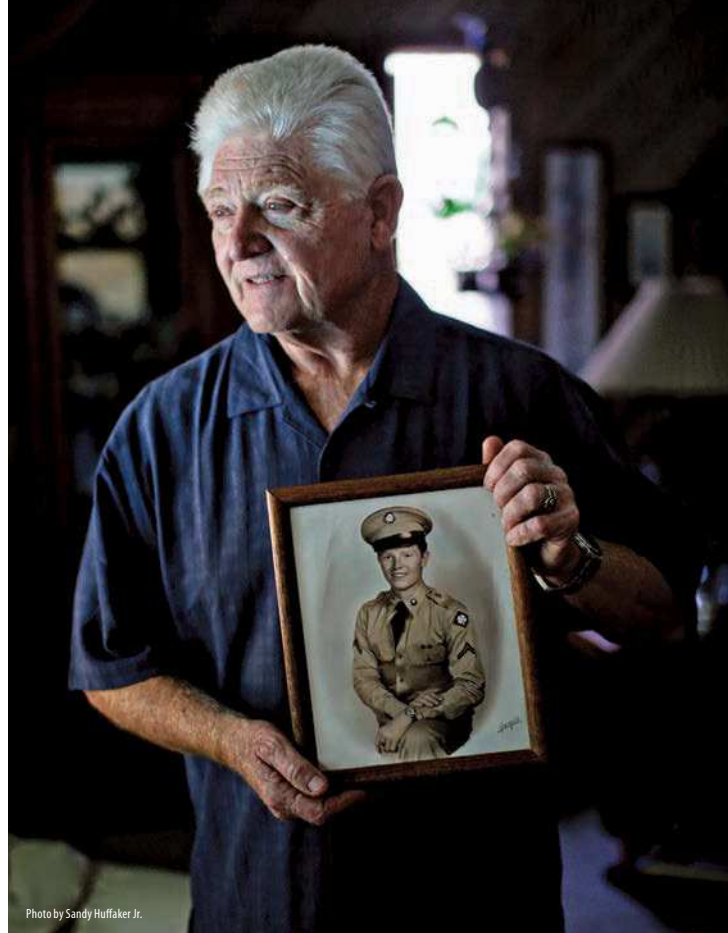


Photo by Sandy Huffaker Jr.

Richard III, was killed in Vietnam in 1965; the Fitzgibbons are one of two confirmed father-son duos to die in the war.)

Kowalski regards his service with the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Vietnam, an early U.S. effort to train the South Vietnamese army to defend itself against the communist North, as one of the defining experiences of his life. Throughout his career as a rehabilitation counselor, special education teacher, and high school drug and alcohol counselor, he kept two photos on his desk. One was of his father at the steel mill in western Pennsylvania that Kowalski sought to escape when he joined the Army. The other was a picture of himself preparing to go to Vietnam.

Kowalski recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine* about his role with MAAGV and his interactions with the Vietnamese people.

## What did you know about Vietnam before you deployed?

My orientation was probably better than anybody else’s because I was attending McKeesport (Pa.) High School in 1954 and my civics teacher – a World War II veteran – taught us current events. French Indochina was falling at the time. Still, Vietnam was so new that after I got my orders I had to go to the Fort Myer library and look it up.

### **What went through your mind as you stepped off that plane in Saigon?**

I was terrified. I remember riding in the jeep to my quarters, going past rice paddies, hearing gunshots, smelling dung.

### **Did that sense of unease persist?**

I was apprehensive. I couldn't tell who the good guys were and who the bad guys were. Saigon was infiltrated by thousands of refugees who were fleeing North Vietnam. No one spoke English. People would drive by and shoot at the Americans. A couple of months after I got there, somebody threw a satchel charge in the back window of one of our Chevy coupes and killed our Vietnamese driver. We weren't allowed to go out during the presidential election in April 1956 – there were demonstrations and shooting – or on May Day, which is a big communist holiday.

### **What was most difficult about your tour?**

Not knowing anything about the Vietnamese culture or people, not understanding the language and what these people had gone through after 100 years of French occupation and, during World War II, four years of Japanese occupation. There were French aristocrats having parties and people living in the gutter starving. You could go from the impoverished to the elite in 10 minutes.

### **Did you blend in as a tourist, like the government hoped?**

I had red hair. People stopped and stared at me when I walked down the street.

### **Describe the assault your first night there.**

I was walking back to the billets with an Army sergeant who was going to be working with me, and these Vietnamese were following us. They started throwing rocks, and I got hit in the head. I had to be sewed up by a dental technician. The next day my commanding officer said, "Did anybody tell you not to go out at night?"

### **How did your perspective on the Vietnamese change?**

I came to respect them. They were very bright people, very industrious. By the time I left, I thought they might just pull it together and win this war. They didn't. But they came over here and grabbed the American dream. Today, if you go to the VA here in San Diego you have a lot of Vietnamese doctors and nurses. The cardiologist who put a couple of stents in me was Vietnamese.

### **How did you come to teach English?**

A guy in the signal section taught a conversational English class in a building next to the embassy. They asked me if I wanted to take his place after he left. It was mostly telling stories about America. They wanted to know what snow was like. If you really had hot water every day. It sparked my interest in education.

### **Describe the group you deployed with.**

There were 350 of us. A lot of the guys with me were career – World War II veterans, and some fought in Korea. About a quarter of us were around Saigon, and 75 percent were out in the provinces teaching the Vietnamese how to fight. Were the bad guys shooting at us? Yes. Were we shooting back at the bad guys? Yes. Did anybody say anything about it? No.

There also were a lot of CIA there, but you didn't know who they were because we all wore civilian clothes. You could be shooting the breeze with a guy at the bar thinking he was another PFC and he was CIA. My older brother, Chester, showed up about six months after I arrived. He was with the Army's Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission, which was supposed to track all of the weapons and ordnance we had given the French that had gone missing.

### **What was your job?**

I was in the signal section. Our primary job was to establish radio contact with our guys out in the bush training the South Vietnamese army. We also monitored Hanoi. And we maintained a signal with Clark Air Base (in the Philippines) because if we evacuated, it was to Clark. It was boring as hell at 2 in the morning, so I listened to Radio Free America and read teletypes of the propaganda broadcasts from Hanoi.

### **And you bought a gun on the black market?**

We were guarded by South Vietnamese troops. They weren't that good, and there weren't enough of them to guard the transmitter and receiver sites. Since I worked 10 miles outside Saigon – and worked alone – I wanted a weapon. I bought a revolver, but it was big and bulky and I felt like John Wayne. So I traded a guy at the U.S. Embassy for a nickel-plated .32-caliber Beretta that I could carry under my shirt. I had to get a license and register my weapon with the Vietnamese-American Consulate. I only used it once. I fired three shots in the air to scare off these Viet Cong who would come to my radio shack at



night and throw rocks at the shutters. Everyone in the signal section bought weapons because of the limited security and sold them to our replacements as we left.

### **How was Tech Sgt.**

#### **Richard Fitzgibbon Jr. killed?**

Fitz was the crew chief on a C-47 that flew provisions out to our guys in the bush. The radioman on his airplane was giving him problems because they were taking ground fire and he was frightened. Fitz was saying, "If you keep flaking off, I'm going to write you up." One night, this radioman got his pistol, came into the bar at the Metropole and started shooting. Emptied one clip. Put another one in his gun, then went outside and shot Fitz four times.

I was coming out of a movie next door, heard all of the gunshots and smelled the cordite. I went around the corner, saw two guys lying on the sidewalk. I knelt down by Fitz and held the back of his head. He wanted to sit up a little bit so he could breathe better. I knew he wasn't going to make it. It was June 8, 1956. I thought, "Jesus, I just graduated from high school two years ago today. What the hell am I doing here?" The other guy who was shot was evacuated to Clark. The radioman went up a fire escape, fell and died.

Somebody put a fishbowl on the counter of the hotel and we put money in it for his widow and four kids. I often wondered what happened to his family – whether his widow ever got that money. There was no Internet, no way to search. I went to the VA in Cleveland after I got home to get the ringing in my ears checked out, and I asked them if they had any records of our group that might help me find his family. The VA told me, "Nobody from the U.S. has gone to Vietnam."

### **How did you finally connect with the Fitzgibbon family?**

A TV reporter called me on Veterans Day 1998 when Fitz's name was going to be added to the Wall. She told me Fitz's daughter lived nearby. So my wife and I followed the reporter over to her house. I gave his daughter pictures of where Fitz lived and where he sat in front of the hotel handing out candy to the Vietnamese children. I told her how he got a jeep and took us all to Mass on Easter Sunday. I asked her if her mother had ever received the money we collected for the family. She didn't know. But that night Fitz's sister, Alice, called me. She said, "Forty-three years later, his widow wants me to thank you."

### **How does it feel to not have your Vietnam service acknowledged?**

There's virtually an era of involvement that is forgotten. Someone in the Pentagon decided Vietnam started in 1962. When I tried to join the VFW, I was told I was not in Vietnam prior to 1962. My DD 214 didn't say "Vietnam," it said "foreign country." I had never really paid attention to it. The Legion classifies me as a Korean War veteran because I served 1954 to 1957.

Nothing that we did compared to what they did from '62 to '75. But that should not denigrate what a few thousand soldiers did before 1962. We had a lot of casualties. And I'm proud of my service. I'm not looking for acknowledgement. I'm looking for recognition that people were there and doing a good and noble thing prior to 1962.

### **Did you think Vietnam would become a controversial war?**

No. I thought we'd have some kind of stalemate, the politicians would get involved and then we would have some kind of agreement with the North. I never in my wildest dreams thought 58,000 guys would never come back.

### **What is MAAG's legacy?**

It was a noble effort to do the right thing in the spirit of the time. Russia and Red China were at their peak. There was an invasive communist threat. The tragedy of the Korean War was still so fresh. We didn't want that to happen again. 🇺🇸

*Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.*

## **Calling all MAAGV personnel**

Two years ago, Wayne McCaughey started searching for soldiers who had served with him in the little-known Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Vietnam. That led him to organize the first reunion of this group of servicemembers who put aside their weapons in the 1950s and early 1960s to help train the Army of the Republic of Vietnam to defend itself from the North Vietnamese.

McCaughey served with MAAG Vietnam in 1960 and sustained shrapnel wounds when a South Vietnamese soldier tripped a land mine.

The reunion, scheduled for May 10-12 in St. Louis, will include servicemembers who served with MAAG Vietnam and its earlier incarnation, MAAG Indochina. For more information, contact McCaughey at (301) 616-3597 or [wmmccaughey@verizon.net](mailto:wmmccaughey@verizon.net).

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# INSIDE REVERSE MORTGAGES

*In some cases they may be useful, but don't think you're getting free money.*

BY J.J. MONTANARO

Imagine walking through the front door of your home and being greeted by a pallet of crisp \$100 bills. Could your house be this cash-generating cow? Reverse mortgage proponents might tell you yes, but nothing is ever that simple. In fact, there's a lot to understand and think about before you pursue this unique type of loan.

It used to be that the primary way to turn the equity in your home into cash – without the burden of loan payments – was to put a for-sale sign in the front yard. But that changed in the 1990s when federally insured reverse mortgages became available. Yet they remain a mystery to many homeowners.

**What is a reverse mortgage?** With a traditional mortgage, you borrow money to buy your home, and equity builds as you pay down the debt. A reverse mortgage works in the opposite direction. You receive money in the form of a loan, based on the equity in your home. Since you don't make payments, the loan balance increases over time and isn't paid back until you die, sell, or it is no longer your principal residence.

The cash can be taken in a lump sum, monthly payments, a line of credit or a combination. The amount available depends on the youngest borrower's age, the home's value (capped at \$625,500), interest rates and the costs of setting up the loan – which could be substantial.

There is no credit score or income requirement. As the borrower, you must keep the home maintained and insured and, of course, pay property taxes. Failing to do so could result in foreclosure. Finally, reverse mortgage borrowers must meet with a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-approved counselor.

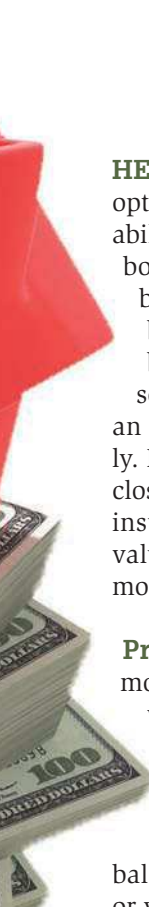
The HUD website offers a calculator to illustrate what you can expect. For example, a 70-year-old

couple with a \$200,000 home owned free and clear could access \$98,000 to \$134,000 through a credit line or lump-sum distribution, or receive a monthly payment ranging from \$613 to \$716 (all amounts are after fees), depending on the program they choose.

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) offers two types of reverse mortgages: the Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) and the HECM Saver. The majority of reverse mortgages are FHA-insured loans.

**Who is eligible?** To qualify for a reverse mortgage, the home must be your primary residence and be owned without a mortgage or have one that can be paid off with the loan. Homeowners must be at least 62. Occasionally, homeowners will attempt to circumvent this requirement by removing the younger spouse from the deed. This is a bad idea. Upon the death of the older spouse, the surviving spouse could be required to pay back the loan – or worse, the bank could foreclose.





**HECM or HECM Saver?** Both offer the same options for receiving loan proceeds, as well as the ability to finance closing costs into the loan. Also, both require monthly mortgage insurance, which boosts the interest rate on the outstanding balance by 1.25 percent. With either option, borrowers wanting a lump-sum payout may select a fixed-rate loan. Any other option requires an adjustable-interest-rate loan that adjusts monthly. However, the HECM Saver reduces the upfront closing fees (by reducing the upfront mortgage insurance premium from 2 percent of the home's value to .01 percent), but reduces the amount of money available by 10 to 18 percent.

**Pros and Cons.** On the positive side, a reverse mortgage allows you to access your home's equity without making payments. Generally, the loan does not need to be repaid until you die, sell the house or it is no longer your primary residence. Since the reverse mortgage is secured only by the home, even if the loan balance eventually exceeds the home's value, you or your heirs can't owe more than it is worth.

On the other hand, these potential benefits come with a hefty price tag. There are the typical closing costs (title insurance, appraisal, etc.), as well as the 1.25 percent monthly mortgage-insurance premium, which elevates the interest rate on reverse mortgages. You also have the upfront mortgage insurance noted earlier. These fees are typically rolled into the loan and, along with any outstanding balance, begin to accrue interest immediately, making a reverse mortgage especially expensive in the early years.

Lenders are required to provide a total annual loan cost (TALC) rate disclosure to compare loans. Costs will vary by lender, so it pays to shop around. Another disadvantage is the fact that you could be forced to pay off the loan or sell the house if you are unable to live in it for more than 12 consecutive months.

The biggest drawback of a reverse mortgage may be the reduction or elimination of the equity in your home that will be available for your heirs.

**Does it fit?** There are several situations in which a reverse mortgage could be useful:

- **When you need it more than they do.** Since a reverse mortgage reduces or eliminates your home equity and could force a sale upon your death, it may be unattractive for someone concerned about their heirs receiving assets. If this isn't a priority, a reverse mortgage might work.

- **When you're house rich and cash poor.** If you're no longer working and own your home, a reverse mortgage could provide funds to supplement Social Security or other income.

- **When you need time.** A reverse mortgage credit line could allow you to liquidate investments at a time of your choice.

- **When you're deferring benefits.** A reverse mortgage could provide income while you allow your Social Security benefits to grow by deferring your start date.

- **When you want to purchase a home without payments.** By combining a reverse mortgage with available cash, you could buy a new home. This could appeal to someone who needs cash and is downsizing to a less expensive home. For example, using a traditional downsizing approach, if a 70-year-old couple cleared \$250,000 on the sale of their two-story home and found a \$200,000 single-story, they could buy that new home with cash and have \$50,000 left over. However, using the reverse mortgage approach, they could use \$66,000 from the sale of their two-story as a down payment and then use the reverse mortgage to finance the remaining \$134,000 of the \$200,000 purchase price – leaving \$184,000 from the sale of their previous home to use for living expenses. Neither approach would require payments.

Of course, reverse mortgages are not the only way to access the equity in your home. Traditional home-equity loans, state-sponsored programs and selling are all viable options.

The decision to use a reverse mortgage is a major financial move. It's a decision that should be made in the context of your overall financial situation and in coordination with your legal and financial counsel. It may not give you a pallet of hundreds, but it could be a helpful option.

*J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA Financial Planning Services, one of the USAA family of companies. USAA is The American Legion's preferred provider for financial services.*

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Servicemembers stand at parade rest next to flag-draped transfer cases during a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) arrival ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii on Nov. 30, in honor of fallen U.S. personnel whose identities remain unknown. DoD photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael R. Holzworth

## VETERANS CARE

### Unique benefit disappears

Georgia veterans can no longer live cost-free in the state's nursing homes for veterans, after a law took effect Feb. 1. Georgia had been the last state to offer such a benefit.

Patients at the two Georgia War Veterans Homes will now pay \$22.81 per day – about \$700 a month.

The reason for the change is simple: the state needs to streamline costs. But the impact on veterans and their families may cause complications.

For veterans and their spouses who are truly struggling financially, there is some hope, says Charles Esposito, executive director of the veterans home in Augusta. "If the patient does not have the \$700, and they can document that they don't have the money, we can issue them a waiver and they won't have to pay it," he says.

Of all the options, this was the best alternative, say Georgia Legionnaires and nursing home administrators. One option would have involved moving the system into Medicare or Medicaid. However, that would have forced the homes to care for both veterans and nonveterans.

## ACTIVE DUTY

### Not made in America

Lawmakers are pressing the Pentagon to stop purchasing military uniforms made outside the United States, *Military Times* reports.

Although DoD is required to purchase clothing and shoes that are "100 percent made in the (United States)," the paper notes that "foreign-made clothing is still ending up in the hands of troops."

And on their feet. The *Times* reports that an Air Force master sergeant "was twice issued boots made in China ... When he asked how he could exchange them for American-made boots, he was told 'good luck.'"

Reps. Michael Michaud, D-Maine, and Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., are leading the effort to make sure U.S. servicemembers are outfitted with American-made clothing and footwear.





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## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# AGAINST ALL ODDS

*In the Jim Crow South, John Stokes led a strike that helped bring about an end to segregation.*

BY BEN SWENSON

When John Stokes entered wartime military service in 1952, he was no stranger to conflict. He'd already taken an audacious stand for justice in his hometown a year before.

In 1951, Stokes was the 19-year-old president of Robert Russa Moton High School's senior class in rural Prince Edward County, Va. That year, he and a handful of student leaders led their classmates in a strike to bring attention to their substandard school. Now, six decades later, Stokes recalls those formative years and how he knew, after standing up to entrenched segregationists, that he'd lead a life of service.

Stokes, like black students all over the Jim Crow South, was painfully aware of the double standard dividing communities at the time. While his white neighbors attended schools with all the modern conveniences, his was a ramshackle complex of brick and tar-paper buildings hastily cobbled together, so inadequate that students used umbrellas inside when it rained.

In April 1951, after weeks of secret planning by a small, select committee of student organizers that included Stokes, all of the school's 450 students refused to attend classes until the school board committed to construction of a new building. Local segregationists didn't take too kindly to this affront, and a palpable tension settled over Prince Edward County in the days that followed.

Black officials were fired from their jobs or found that they couldn't conduct business as usual. Stokes' family would turn out the lights when they heard their dog barking at night for fear it might be someone intent on doing them harm. Someone burned a cross on school grounds. "There were targets on our back," Stokes says. "For a long time I was a marked man for organizing this strike, and some people didn't let go of that easily."

The students' strike caught the attention of Virginia's NAACP, which decided to sue the Prince Edward County School Board, contending that sending blacks and whites to separate schools was unconstitutional. Within a few weeks, Stokes and his classmates returned to school with a new and powerful ally on their side. Two years later, NAACP lawyers combined the Prince Edward County lawsuit with four similar cases and argued them before the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which famously outlawed the long-standing "separate but equal" doctrine in U.S. schools.

Meanwhile, Stokes had continued his education until his nation came calling. He was drafted and went to basic training at Fort Belvoir, Va., in 1952. He was already familiar with military service; his three brothers and one of his sisters

served in World War II, including one as a driver with the famed Red Ball Express. "Even as a teenager I saw the irony of a country that required service of people the law regarded as second-class citizens," Stokes says.

He was nervous about the possibility of being sent to Korea, but he approached his new calling with the commitment that had seen him through the challenging days of high school. During boot camp, Stokes drew on the discipline, courage and leadership that had helped him stand up to Prince Edward County's school board. On his second day, the drill instructor made him a squad leader.

Alas, Stokes' eyesight – which he says

was passable but not great – handicapped his ability on the shooting range, keeping him from being sent to Korea. He served with the 9829th Technical Service Unit at Fort Belvoir, eventually attaining the rank of corporal.

He never told anyone in the Army what he'd done in high school. Four years earlier, President Harry Truman had signed Executive Order 9981, integrating the armed forces. Stokes was encouraged by efforts to desegregate the Army, but still saw vestiges of its divided past. Stokes' unit, Company B of the 9829th, was all-black despite Truman's order. At basic training, one recruit had been told so often that blacks shouldn't handle weaponry that he wet himself when a drill instructor handed him a gun. Another time, while traveling through Tennessee tracking down AWOL soldiers, Stokes and another black soldier nearly had their military-issued .45s confiscated by an overzealous small-town sheriff, incredulous that the pair had been given weapons.

Stokes eventually left the military to pursue college, but says his service left a lasting impression on him. "It's hard for some people to understand this, but I think all young adults should be required to serve in the military. It would teach them the respect and discipline that are lacking today."

After college, Stokes had a long and distinguished career in education as a teacher and principal. Retirement didn't slow him, though. He penned a book – "Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, *Brown*, and Me" – about his experiences as a young man. In 2008, the state of Virginia unveiled a monument honoring local civil rights leaders at its Capitol, and his likeness is included among the 18 statues.

Stokes continues to lecture to groups about his experiences in the segregated South and during wartime. "I'll continue as long as God gives me strength," he says.

*Ben Swenson is a freelance writer living in Williamsburg, Va.*



John Stokes Photo by Sam Horton



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MagniLife® Sciatica Relief is available at Walgreens, CVS/pharmacy and Rite Aid Pharmacy. It can also be ordered risk free for \$19.99 (plus \$5.95 S&H) for 125 tablets per bottle. Get a FREE bottle when you order two for \$39.98 (plus \$9.95 S&H). Send your name and address with payment to: MagniLife, Dept. SAL-6, P.O. Box 6789, McKinney, TX 75071 or call 1-800-223-1405. Satisfaction guaranteed or return the bottles within 90 days for a full refund. Order now at [www.MagniLife.com](http://www.MagniLife.com).

# LEG CRAMPS AT NIGHT?

If you experience painful and annoying muscle cramps in your legs, calves, feet, or toes, especially at night, you should know relief is available. Over 100 million people suffer from nocturnal leg cramps and are putting up with the pain and loss of sleep because they are not aware of this proven treatment.

MagniLife® Leg Cramp Relief is now helping people that have been living with painful cramps for years. It can be taken along with other medications with no side effects. *"I highly recommend Leg Cramp Relief. A couple tablets before bed, and no more waking up to painful cramps in my calves."* - Joyce,

Denver, CO. Tablets dissolve under the tongue and contain eight active ingredients, such as magnesia phosphorica, which reduces cramps and radiating pains that are worse at night.

MagniLife® Leg Cramp Relief is available at CVS/pharmacy and Rite Aid Pharmacy. It can also be ordered for \$19.99 (plus \$5.95 S&H) for 125 tablets per bottle. Get a FREE bottle when you order two for \$39.98 (plus \$9.95 S&H). Send name and address with payment to: MagniLife, Dept. LAL-6, P.O. Box 6789, McKinney, TX 75071 or call 1-800-223-1405. Satisfaction guaranteed or return the bottles within 90 days for a full refund. Order now at [www.MagniLife.com](http://www.MagniLife.com).

# FIBROMYALGIA PAIN?

If you suffer from aches and pains all over, have difficulty sleeping, and have the feeling of little or no energy, you may be one of the six million Americans who suffer from Fibromyalgia. These pains can be in the neck, shoulders, back, arms, and legs and can be accompanied by muscle tenderness and soreness. Many people are living in pain because they are not aware of this new proven treatment.

MagniLife® Fibromyalgia Relief relieves the everyday pain by using ingredients such as Conium that trigger reactions from the body to effectively relieve symptoms when nothing else has worked. The tablets dissolve under the tongue and can be taken safely along with other medications with no side effects. *"Fibromyalgia*

*Relief tablets have worked like a miracle. I have tried all other sorts of medications. I've been taking them less than two weeks, and my fingers and hands aren't stiff anymore. Whatever is in them works beautifully!"* - Helen D., AL.

MagniLife® Fibromyalgia Relief is available at Rite Aid Pharmacy. It can also be ordered risk free for \$19.99 (plus \$5.95 S&H) for 125 tablets per bottle. Get a FREE bottle when you order two for \$39.98 (plus \$9.95 S&H). Send your name and address with payment to: MagniLife, Dept. FAL-6, P.O. Box 6789, McKinney, TX 75071 or call 1-800-223-1405. Satisfaction guaranteed or return the bottles within 90 days for a full refund. Order now at [www.MagniLife.com](http://www.MagniLife.com).

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

## MEMBERSHIP

### NEW POSTS

**Post 140, Prescott Valley, Ariz.**  
Chartered Dec. 10 (19 members)

**Heartland Women Veterans  
Post 1107, Independence, Mo.**  
Chartered Dec. 5 (37 members)

**Taymouth Township Post 99,  
Burt, Mich.** Chartered Nov. 5  
(20 members)

**Post 70, Highland Park, Mich.**  
Chartered Oct. 17 (15 members)

**NDSU Post 400, Fargo, N.D.**  
Chartered Oct. 15 (37 members)

**Post 1800, Catoosa, Okla.**  
Chartered Oct. 13 (20 members)

**Washington City Post 912,  
Washington, Utah** Chartered  
Oct. 1 (11 members)

## VERBATIM

*"I don't think my name will mean much to the bear business, but you're welcome to use it."*

President Theodore Roosevelt, in a 1903 letter to the manufacturer of the first teddy bear







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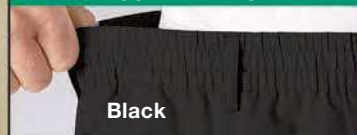
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## MEMORIAM

## Senator, World War II hero Daniel Inouye remembered

U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, the most senior member of the Senate and a World War II combat hero, died Dec. 17 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. He was 88.



Born in Honolulu in 1924, Inouye represented Hawaii in the nation's capital for as long as it has been a state, elected as its first congressional representative in 1959 and to the Senate in 1962. He was part of some of the seminal political events of the late 20th century: keynote speaker at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, member of the Watergate Committee in the 1970s and chairman of the Iran-Contra Committee in 1987.

Before he began serving his state, Inouye served his country. He volunteered for the Army in 1943. In San Terenzo, Italy, in April 1945, 2nd Lt. Inouye destroyed two enemy machine-gun emplacements with grenades under heavy fire. The battle cost him his arm, but eventually led to Inouye's being awarded the Medal of Honor in 2000.

During his nine terms in the Senate, Inouye was at various times chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. Throughout, he shared The American Legion's belief in a strong national defense and quality of life for servicemembers and their families. He was a 57-year Legionnaire.

"America lost a true hero, and veterans lost a staunch advocate, with the passing of U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye," National Commander Jim Koutz said. "His love of country was never more evident than when he earned the Medal of Honor and incurred serious wounds while leading his men in battle at San Terenzo, Italy. His lifetime passion for veterans, our military and our national security led The American Legion to present him with our prestigious Good Guy Award in 2005 (at the 87th National Convention in Honolulu). Sen. Inouye was a proud Legionnaire and a great patriot."



## EDUCATION

## Normandy Academy

The National World War II Museum and National History Day are joining forces to offer high school students the chance to research and eulogize U.S. heroes who gave their lives in Normandy, France, nearly 70 years ago.

Normandy Academy's "D-Day: Stories of Service and Sacrifice" program begins in March, when students are assigned the names of U.S. military personnel laid to rest at the American cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach. Before gathering in New Orleans in July, students will research the history of the fallen servicemember, his unit and hometown, working with a mentor from the National World War II Museum.

The program offers exclusive access to museum archives and artifacts, opportunities to meet with veterans who were part of the pivotal World War II invasion and a chance to see in person the battle sites in France. Once the students have completed their work, they will give eulogies at the Normandy American Cemetery. The travel portion of the academy runs July 8-21.

 [www.normandyacademy.org](http://www.normandyacademy.org)

 [normandyacademy@nationalww2museum.org](mailto:normandyacademy@nationalww2museum.org)

 (504) 528-1944, ext. 257



## BY THE NUMBERS

## Hub of the drone war

The *Washington Post* recently offered a revealing behind-the-curtain portrait of the U.S. base in Djibouti, the tiny East African country that has played an increasingly vital part in the United States' post-9/11 campaigns:

**500** Acres of the Djibouti base, known as Camp Lemonnier

**16** Number of times per day drones take off or land, bound for Somalia, Yemen and destinations unknown

**8,000** Miles between Djibouti-based drones and their pilots at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada and Cannon Air Force Base in New Mexico

**300** Approximate number of Special Operations shooters stationed at Camp Lemonnier

**3,200** U.S. troops, civilians and contractors based in Djibouti

# The invention of the year is great news for your ears

*Perfect Choice HD™ is easy to use,  
hard to see and costs far less...  
it's like reading glasses for your ears™!*

## New Personal Sound Amplification Product is an affordable alternative

Over the years, technology has made the way we live easier, safer and more convenient. In many cases, it's even made many products more affordable... (remember how much the first VCR used to cost?). Unfortunately, the cost of hearing aids never seemed to come down. Now, a new alternative has been invented... it's called Perfect Choice HD™.

***"Reading glasses for your ears"***

Perfect Choice HD is NOT a hearing aid. Hearing aids can only be sold by an audiologist or a licensed hearing instrument specialist. In order to get a hearing aid, you had to go to the doctor's office for a battery of tests and numerous fitting appointments. Once they had you tested and fitted, you would have to pay as much as \$5000 for the product. Now, thanks to the efforts

of the doctor who leads a renowned hearing institute, there is Perfect Choice HD. It's designed to accurately amplify sounds and deliver them to your ear. Because we've developed an efficient production process, we can make a great product at an affordable price. The unit has been designed to have an easily accessible battery, but it is small and lightweight enough to hide behind your ear... only you'll

### Perfect Choice HD feature comparison

	Perfect Choice HD	Others
Lightweight and Inconspicuous	YES	Some
Easy Toggle Switch Adjustment	YES	Few
Tests and Fittings Required	NO	Most
Affordable	YES	as much as \$5000
<b>Friendly Return Policy</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Rarely</b>

know you have it on. It's comfortable and won't make you feel like you have something stuck in your ear. It provides high quality audio so sounds and conversations will be easier to hear and understand.

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### ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

## VA's adult day care program offers recreation, peer support



**Tracy L. Davis**  
Department Service  
Officer, Missouri

**Q:** *My dad is alone most days, and he seems to be forgetting simple things. I can't be with him as much as he needs. His doctor says it's nothing serious and that some more activity would help him. How do I get adult day care for my dad?*

**A:** Adult day health care is part of VA medical benefits, and all enrolled veterans are eligible to apply. The program is for veterans who need skilled services, case management and assistance with activities of daily living (e.g., bathing, dressing, fixing meals, taking medicine), are isolated, or have an overburdened caregiver. Adult day health care can be used in combination with other home- and community-based services, and according to VA's Guide to Long Term Care, it offers a place for veterans to go during the day for social activities, peer support, companionship and recreation.

Adult day health care can provide respite care for a family caregiver, in addition to helping veterans and their caregivers learn how to manage veterans' care at home. The program can be half-day or full-day two to three times per week, though a veteran may be able to go up to five times a week. Adult day health care may be provided at VA medical centers, state veterans homes or community organizations. Co-payments may be charged based on eligibility status and means-test criteria. Contact your VA case manager to complete the Application for Extended Care Benefits (VA Form 10-10EC).

If the veteran is enrolled at VA, contact the social worker on the veteran's Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT). If you do not have a PACT social worker, contact the VA Medical Center Social Work Service at [www.socialwork.va.gov](http://www.socialwork.va.gov). Veterans not enrolled at VA should talk to a service officer or call (877) 222-8387 to ask about enrolling. To find an American Legion accredited service officer in your area, visit [www.legion.org/serviceofficers](http://www.legion.org/serviceofficers).

*Do you have a question for Department of Missouri Service Officer Tracy Davis about the claims process or veterans benefits in general?*

Send it to [askso@legion.org](mailto:askso@legion.org).

### VERBATIM



**"We've got bigger fish to fry."**

**President Barack Obama**, when asked if the Justice Department will prosecute marijuana users in Colorado and Washington. The two states voted in November to legalize marijuana, but the substance remains illegal under federal law. U.S. Attorney John Walsh said DoJ is "reviewing" the ballot initiatives but that the department's "responsibility to enforce the Controlled Substances Act remains unchanged."

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## PERSONAL FINANCE



## Saving, paying off debt among best uses for tax refunds

The word “windfall” brings to mind tantalizing images of a monster lottery payout or a huge, unexpected inheritance. But this month we’re thinking of a windfall that’s a little smaller and a lot more common: the tax refund.

Over the past couple of years, the average refund to taxpayers has hovered near \$3,000. We’re not sure this is a great thing – letting the government hang onto your money, interest free, over the course of the year – but if you’ve got a refund coming we’d like to help you make the best use of it before it’s nothing but a memory or a big-screen TV. While you might consider us the no-fun duo, we’ll try to be balanced with these four ideas to make Uncle Sam “that” uncle:

■ **Pay down debt.** The average household carries more than \$7,000 in credit-card debt. A supersized payment made possible by a big tax refund could be just what you need to make 2013 your year to finally get rid of debt. But you may not want to use the entire refund to trim your debt, because our second idea is central to avoiding debt in the future.

■ **Build an emergency fund.** If you don’t have the old cash stash of three to six months’ worth of committed expenses set aside for when something goes awry, now is the time. Otherwise, new tires, a new furnace or the need to help out

### FOCUS ON FINANCES



WITH JUNE WALBERT  
& J.J. MONTANARO

with a sick grandchild could leave you in the red. For that reason, we think setting a little aside to start building or add to your existing cushion is a great way to go.

■ **Save for retirement.** Will your tax refund be the engine that single-handedly funds your golden years? Nope. However, it could be the spark that gets you consistently putting money away in an IRA, Roth IRA or employer plan. Use your refund to get – and keep – the ball rolling.

■ **Preventive saving.** Yes, we know life is not all work and no play. But we’d rather play with our own money and avoid paying interest. Consider setting aside a portion of your refund to fund this summer’s vacation or break out an envelope and put some away for next year’s holiday shopping. If you’re still paying for last year’s gifts, set a different course this year by leveraging your refund.

Windfalls come in all shapes and sizes, and you may have one in the mail, snail or electronic. Use it wisely.

*June Lantz Walbert and J.J. Montanaro are certified financial planners for USAA, The American Legion’s preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for them online.*

[www.legion.org/focusonfinances](http://www.legion.org/focusonfinances)

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

## Help brand your American Legion



As part of The American Legion’s strategy for continuous growth, we have to concentrate more on marketing ourselves. No one does as much for active-duty military, veterans, military retirees and their families as does the Legion. But we don’t have a memorable, catchy and consistent tagline that tells people about who we are and what we do. So we need your help.

Submit a new Legion tagline to [tagline@legion.org](mailto:tagline@legion.org). All submissions must be received no later than April 19.

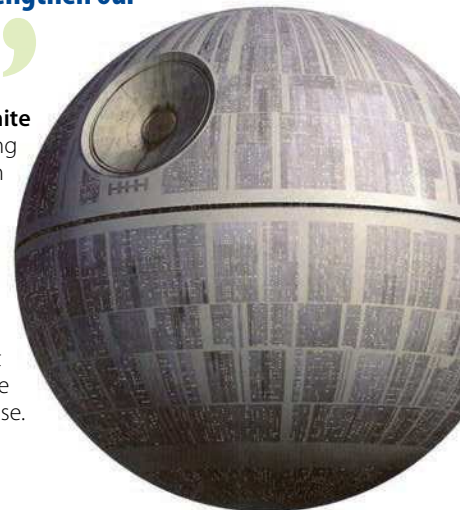
If your tagline is adopted by the NEC during Spring Meetings in May, you will receive \$500 and a certificate-of-appreciation plaque signed by the national commander.

Submissions may come from individuals (membership is not required), posts, districts, counties or departments. In the event of duplicate winning entries, the earliest received will be declared the winner. Include your name and phone number on each entry. Only one entry per email submission is allowed. Entries will be acknowledged by a return email; save it as proof of your submission.

## VERBATIM

“By focusing our defense resources into a space-superiority platform and weapon system such as a Death Star, the government can spur job creation in the fields of construction, engineering, space exploration and more, and strengthen our national defense.”

A petition on the White House website, calling for the administration to begin construction of a “Star Wars”-inspired Death Star by 2016. The petition attracted more than 25,000 signatures, enough to merit a response from the White House.





## The MOST DANGEROUS room in your home... the bathroom

*According to The New York Times\*, the bathroom can be the most dangerous room in the home. Hundreds of thousands of falls and accidents happen each year.*

**FACT:** 1 in 3 adults 65+ fall each year, and falls are the leading cause of injury death as well as the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.\*\*

\*BAKALAR, NICHOLAS. "Watch Your Step While Washing Up." New York Times 16, Aug. 2011, New York Edition ed., Section D sec.: D7. Web \*\*CDC - Center for Disease Control and Prevention



Safe Step Tubs have received the Ease-of-Use Commendation from the Arthritis Foundation

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## MEDIA

## Sign up for Legion's Digital Dispatch

The print version of The American Legion's newsletter for leaders, *Dispatch*, is not going away, but it has a new form. Instead of its current newspaper style, *Dispatch* has been reformatted into a succinct, colorful newsletter that informs readers on important Legion news, and guides them to [www.legion.org/dispatch](http://www.legion.org/dispatch) for more in-depth content.

While *Dispatch* will still be mailed monthly, *Digital Dispatch* provides high-quality information faster and more frequently to post, district and department leaders. It also provides leaders with access to materials that will help them manage their posts, increase membership, submit award entries, and communicate with one another as well as with National Headquarters.

Sign up now for the free monthly *Digital Dispatch* e-newsletter online.

 [www.legion.org/subscribe](http://www.legion.org/subscribe)

## EDUCATION

## Institutions now charge VA actual net cost of in-state tuition



**Q:** *My daughter has been attending a university in New York since August 2009. I transferred my GI Bill eligibility to her when she started, and as an out-of-state student, she received 70 percent of the out-of-state tuition and fees rate charged by the institution along with the housing allowance. Unfortunately, the*

*registrar who handled the paperwork retired, and his replacement told my daughter that the paperwork was incorrectly completed and that she was only eligible to receive 70 percent of the in-state tuition and fees rate charged by the institution. Was she overpaid, or has the benefit changed?*

**A:** Your daughter was not overcharged. Effective Aug. 1, 2009, VA paid the higher cost of tuition, including out-of-state tuition, and the maximum fees charged by a public institution for undergraduate training in the state where the student is enrolled. However, the law changed, effective Aug. 1, 2011. The institution now charges VA the actual net cost of in-state tuition and fees after waivers, scholarships, aid or assistance other than Title IV funds.

Valerie Heffner, a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona, is a past vice president of the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators. [askvalerie@legion.org](mailto:askvalerie@legion.org)

## ACTIVE DUTY

## The aging Air Force

PLANE	ENTERED SERVICE
B-52 bomber	1954
U-2 recon jet	1955
KC-135 tanker	1956
F-15 fighter-bomber	1974
F-16 fighter-bomber	1979
B-1B bomber	1986
B-2 bomber	1989



An F-15E Strike Eagle roars into the sky over Afghanistan.

U.S. Air Force photo by Tech Sgt. Matthew Hecht

## WORLD WAR II

## Boarding history

The Navy's LST (Landing Ship, Tank) was an amphibious craft capable of delivering vehicles, troops and supplies directly onto a beach, then heading back into open water. One such ship, LST 325, participated in U.S. action at Sicily, Salerno and Normandy during some of World War II's most famous battles.

In late 1999, the ship was set for scuttling. But a group of American veterans had other ideas. The USS LST Ship Memorial, Inc., organized to, as group president Ken Frank put it, "take the ship to the people and tell them about the important role of LSTs in World War II, Korea and Vietnam." The group raised enough money to purchase LST 325 from the Greek navy in 2000, and a year later the members sailed the ship from Crete to Alabama themselves. The ship's current home is on the Ohio River in Evansville, Ind., where the group undocks it and takes it on a river cruise every year, stopping in various cities to offer tours to the public to raise money for maintenance. Last fall, LST 325's tour included the Tennessee cities of Nashville and Clarksville.

 [www.lstmemorial.org](http://www.lstmemorial.org)



Several Legionnaires helped bring the World War II ship LST 325 to Nashville, Tenn., last fall to raise money for maintenance and repairs through tours. Photo by Martin B. Cherry



# AGING IS NATURAL. GIVING UP ON YOUR VIRILITY ISN'T!

BRING BACK THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE...  
HERE'S HOW ONE MAN DID IT!

Although this would otherwise be an embarrassing subject – I feel strongly about sharing my recent experience with others my age. Simply put, I'm 57 years old and even though I'm in good health overall, my body just doesn't respond like it used to. Intimacy and virility have become an issue.

Recently, I found myself struggling to "perform." I began losing my confidence and with it, my sense of "male prowess". I was feeling a great deal of pressure and embarrassment, my wife was beginning to think it was something she did or didn't do – it wasn't.

I wasn't comfortable discussing my situation with anyone – not even my doctor – so in a desperate attempt to find some help, I privately did some research on the web.

First, I found that many **HEALTHY** men experience a decrease in virility with age. I wasn't alone! Good blood circulation is the key to maintaining virility, and there are a number of factors that can weaken it.

Armed with this new information, I began to search through the many "male enhancement" products on the net. I found a pill and patch for everything and anything, but one product stood out among them - **Maxoderm** is completely different – not a pill or a patch, this surprisingly effective **topical formula** is delivered directly to the "source" – where I needed it most. Best of all, **Maxoderm** is recommended by **Leading Physician, Michael A. Savino, M.D., F.A.C.S.**, and you don't need a prescription. I don't need to swallow a pill, prescription or not, or wear some kind of patch on my shoulder!

After trying **Maxoderm** just once, I could actually feel it working immediately, it felt incredible! What a difference! I couldn't believe it - virility like I haven't felt in years! My driver's license says I'm 57, but thanks to **Maxoderm**, my wife says I'm 18 again! It feels great! I now know it's normal to experience some problems with virility at my age, but **Maxoderm** let me deal with it naturally. No pills – no patches – and even better – no embarrassing appointment with the doctor.

Try **Maxoderm**. You'll feel it working immediately, and can get back to living your life!

Jim S. Miami, Florida

P.S. - I'm pretty sure you can still get a **FREE MONTH SUPPLY** of **MAXODERM** with your order by calling **1-800-461-4051**, or by visiting their website **www.MAXODERM.com**. Oh, and even better, this product is backed by a **30-Day Money Back Guarantee!** So call while supplies last - you (and your wife) will be glad you did!

Individual results may vary. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information featured above has been compiled from actual letters we've received from a few of our many satisfied customers. Dr. Savino is a compensated member of the Barmen Advisory Board. AMLE0113



“MY DRIVER'S LICENSE  
SAYS I'M 57, BUT MY WIFE  
SAYS I'M 18 AGAIN!”

*Clinically-Tested*



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*Leading Physician, Dr. Michael A. Savino, F.A.C.S.*



### How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org) or submit information via our website, [www.legion.org/reunions](http://www.legion.org/reunions).

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

### Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org).

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

### AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

**3rd TFW (Bien Hoa, Vietnam)**, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, 9/4-8, Buddy Tate, (336) 260-0467, [tate4224@bellsouth.net](mailto:tate4224@bellsouth.net); **20th FW Assn - 20th FG, FBW, TFW (1930s-2013)**, Charleston, SC, 10/23-28, David Skilling, (770) 429-9955, [abbyndavid@aol.com](mailto:abbyndavid@aol.com); **47th Armament & Electronics Sqdn (RAF Sculthorpe, Norfolk, UK)**, Niagara Falls, NY, 9/26-29, Larry Brown, (724) 274-0973, [leroy\\_brown@verizon.net](mailto:leroy_brown@verizon.net); **55th & 58th Weather Recon Sqdns**, Branson, MO, 6/5-8, Conrad Layton, (918) 446-6945, [conradlay@aol.com](mailto:conradlay@aol.com); **60th Trp Carrier Grp**

**& C-119 Vets (1950-1961)**, Branson, MO, 9/15-18, Paul Baldwin, (254) 694-2267, [dbaldwin@hillsboro.net](mailto:dbaldwin@hillsboro.net); **91st SRW (McGuire AFB, 1948-1949, Yokota AB, 1950-1954, Barksdale AFB, 1950-1951 & Lockbourne AFB, 1951-1957), 91st BG (WWII) & Lockbourne AFB Reunion Grp**, Omaha, NE, 8/21-27, Jim Bard, (410) 549-1094, [jimbardjr@comcast.net](mailto:jimbardjr@comcast.net); **510th Ftr Sqdn (1949-2012)**, Fairborn, OH, 9/4-7, Guy Wright, (734) 740-3164, [wrightguy15@yahoo.com](mailto:wrightguy15@yahoo.com); **525th FIS F-86 & F-102**, Las Vegas, 4/26-28, Frank Litt, (817) 294-1136, [525bulldogs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:525bulldogs@sbcglobal.net); **AAF/AF OCS**, San Antonio, 5/24-27, Dave Mason, (757) 369-1169, [\[verizon.net\]\(mailto:verizon.net\); \*\*F-106 Trps\*\*, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, 9/11-15, Bob Kwiecinski, \(734\) 429-0772, \[bobski9933@aol.com\]\(mailto:bobski9933@aol.com\); \*\*SAC Elite Guard Sec Police \(Offutt AFB, NE\)\*\*, Omaha, NE, 7/25-28, Gary Schwirtz, \(507\) 319-5902, \[gschwirtz@charter.net\]\(mailto:gschwirtz@charter.net\)](mailto:blokemason@</a></p>
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### ARMY

**1st Bn 40th Arty (Vietnam)**, Lawton, OK, 6/24-27, Jim Olsen, (218) 657-2518, [linjimol@gvtel.com](mailto:linjimol@gvtel.com); **1st Mil Intel Bn (ARS)**, Las Vegas, 6/13-15, Don Skinner, (503) 648-6059, [donsk@frontier.com](mailto:donsk@frontier.com); **3rd Port Reunion of Army Mariners**, Fort Eustis, VA, 5/17-19, Becky Brashears, (757) 566-8110, [tugchick@aol.com](mailto:tugchick@aol.com); **7/13th Arty Vietnam**, Charleston, SC, 10/9-13, Robert Adams, (859) 806-5199, [7.13reunion@gmail.com](mailto:7.13reunion@gmail.com); **11th Abn Div, 11th Air Assault Div 187th ARCT Mid-Atlantic Chpt**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 2/24-26, Herb Shapiro, (410) 827-6410, [hshap@atlanticbb.net](mailto:hshap@atlanticbb.net); **15th Med Bn/Medevac 1st Cav Div**, Sacramento, CA, 4/17-21, Jim Calibro, (209) 573-0701, [jimcc4@att.net](mailto:jimcc4@att.net); **26th Inf Rgt "Blue Spaders"**, Colorado Springs, CO, 6/19-22, Tom Galvin, (703) 599-6480, [tomgalvin.26thinfantry@gmail.com](mailto:tomgalvin.26thinfantry@gmail.com)

**121st Assault Heli Co 93d Trans Co**, Fort Worth, TX, 5/16-19, John Schmied, (352) 633-0541, [johndschmied@yahoo.com](mailto:johndschmied@yahoo.com); **168th Cbt Eng Bn**, Omaha, NE, 5/16-18, Bob Ekdahl, (401) 496-0688, [rekdahl@tconl.com](mailto:rekdahl@tconl.com); **279th Cbt Eng Bn**, Johnson City, TN, 8/8-10, John Weinkam, (410) 391-0060; **536th MP Co**, Glenwood Springs, CO, 8/7-10, David Howell, (303) 994-2440, [howellnanny@aol.com](mailto:howellnanny@aol.com); **809th Eng Bn & 561st Co (Thailand, 1962-1971)**, Dodge City, KS, 8/30-9/1, Richard Henderson, (785) 852-4707, [agcat1@yahoo.com](mailto:agcat1@yahoo.com); **826th Ord Co (Vietnam)**, Madison, WI, 4/13, Pete Storch, (608) 873-3007, [handpstorch@yahoo.com](mailto:handpstorch@yahoo.com); **Army Transport Corps**, Hampton Roads, VA, 7/27, Warren Joyce, (757) 223-1898, [wjoyce4@cox.net](mailto:wjoyce4@cox.net); **Saumur Gen Depot**, Sedona, AZ, 5/19-23, Richard Miller, (949) 770-2543, [rkmgmiller@hotmail.com](mailto:rkmgmiller@hotmail.com); **USAREUR G2**, Jacksonville, FL, 5/31-6/3, Lee McCaslin, (205) 655-5071, [lmccaslin1@charter.net](mailto:lmccaslin1@charter.net); **Vietnam Guntruckers & All Trans Units**, Indianapolis, 8/6-11, John Dodd, (434) 724-1469, [johndodd@centurylink.net](mailto:johndodd@centurylink.net)

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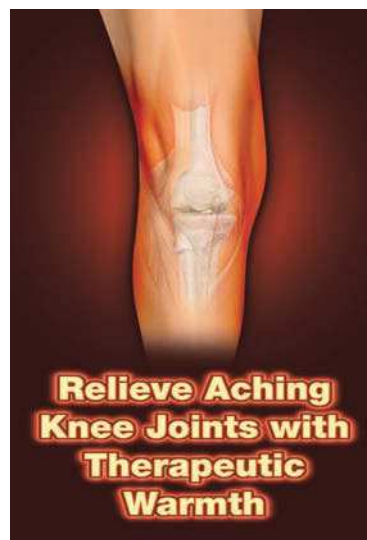
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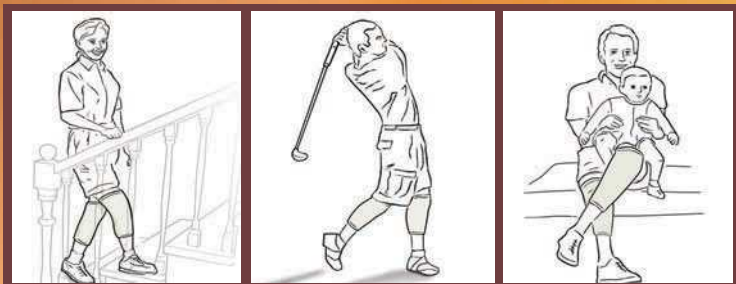
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## MARINES

**3rd Mar Div Assn**, Alexandria, VA, 8/14-18, Don Gee, (215) 822-9094, gygee@aol.com; **Kilo Co 3rd Bn 7th Mar Rgt & Attached Units (Vietnam)**, Jacksonville, FL, 9/18-23, William Rolke, (262) 780-0993, k37usmc@att.net

## NAVY

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Nashville, TN, 6/19-23, Steve Massey, (410) 883-3361, ctbwonder@verizon.net; **SE Regional Sub Conv**, Charleston, SC, 4/7-11, Thom Beach, (843) 761-7134, thombeach@yahoo.com; **Shangri-La CV/CVA/CVS 38**, Washington, 8/21-26, Gary Clark, (814) 587-2122, gndclark@hotmail.com; **Sierra AD 18**, Charleston, SC, 10/9-12, Bill Skillin, (816) 584-0055, bjskil6299@sbcglobal.net; **Sigourney DD 643**, Baton Rouge, LA, 10/3-6, Tom Gould, (615) 824-0496, tjzee@comcast.net; **Sproston DD/DDE 577**, San Pedro, CA, 9/4-8, Michael Bereskin, (415) 239-0104, sproston@sbcglobal.net; **VA-81**, Norfolk, VA, 4/11-13, Jack Bernhardt, (919) 257-9965, jbernhardt@mindspring.com; **VB-109/VPB-109 Bomb Sqdn**, St. Louis, 10/3-6, Roy Balke, (814) 866-6683; **VP-69 (NW Patrol Sqdns)**, Oak Harbor, WA, 9/27-28, Daryl Phillippi, (503) 238-6020, darl\_p@juno.com; **Waller DD/DDE 466**, Lexington, KY, 9/18-21, Keith Lemons, (606) 365-2902, hawkeyefarm1@searnet.com; **Warrington**, Norfolk, VA, 4/24-27, Steve Zenes, (704) 821-1324, stevez843@windstream.net

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**3rd Bn Plt 3055 (San Diego, May-Aug 1975)**, Michael Finley, (254) 842-4961, mffinley54@yahoo.com  
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**601st AAA Gun Bn B Btry (Europe, WWII)**, Ed Ward, (360) 423-5618, kljoplin@hotmail.com  
**1404th MP Co (Palawan, Philippines, 1945)**, Gordon Mailloux, (671) 647-6455, 90\_guam@yahoo.com  
**6348th Munitions Maint (Yamada Ammo Depot, Japan)**, Jim Agent, (479) 414-4233, jimagent1122@yahoo.com  
**7778th Sig Serv Co (Kaiserslautern, Kleber Kaserne, Baumholder, Germany, 1951-1953)**, George Ammerman, (812) 623-3504, georgeammerman@yahoo.com  
**AACS CBI (New Delhi, Nagpur/Bangalore & Dum Dum, Calcutta, WWII)**, Edward Penzer, (212) 537-6670, edwardpenzer@yahoo.com  
**ACTU 100A (Cantho, Vietnam, 1966)**, Steve Swanson, (941) 751-9141, bywater04@aol.com  
**Cargo Handling Bn 1 (Williamsburg, VA, Christmas 1965, or McMurdo Sound, Antarctica)**, Roy Fowler, (602) 326-2046

**Co 3 (Bainbridge, MD, April 1951)**, Donald Richardson, (732) 280-2127  
**Co 818 (NTC Great Lakes, IL, May-July 1945)**, Roger Rupnow, (404) 255-2449  
**HHC 1st Bn 35th Inf 3rd Bde 4th Inf Div (Kontum & Oasis, Vietnam, 1967-1968)**, Barry Keefer, (717) 944-5235, bjkee@comcast.net  
**HQ Btry 74th FA Bn (Germany, 1955-1956)**, John Littleton, (606) 474-9651  
**Pennsylvania BB 38 (Hawaii & South Pacific, 1945)**, Randy French, (502) 968-2883  
**Plt 328 (Parris Island, SC, Mar-June 1972)**, Allen Krieg, (412) 279-7247, callenkrieg@rosamarketing.com  
**XV Corps (Fort Scott, Presidio of San Francisco, 1964-1966)**, Sam Black, (717) 919-5734, scblack41@hotmail.com

## TAPS

**Charlie M. Eskridge, Dept. of California**. Dept. Cmdr. 2006-2007 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2002-2006.  
**Thomas G. Holzgen, Dept. of Michigan**. Dept. Cmdr. 2004-2005, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1993-1995 and 1996-2004, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2008-2011, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2009-2011, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 2011-2012, Nat'l Public Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2011-2012 and Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2012.  
**Clayton J. Hueske, Dept. of Texas**. Dept. Cmdr. 2002-2003, Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1994-1995 and 2007-2009, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1998-2003, Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn. Region 4 Memb. 2003-2005 and Nat'l Econ. Cmsn. Memb. 2005-2007.  
**Kenneth C. Kieffer, Dept. of Missouri**. Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Memb. 2004-2011.  
**Gregory M. Kowatch, Dept. of Alaska**. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2010-2011.  
**Dale F. Lutman, Dept. of West Virginia**. Dept. Cmdr. 1998-1999, Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1994-1996, Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Memb. 1996-2003 and Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2003-2007.  
**Russell W. Peck, Dept. of Wisconsin**. Dept. Cmdr. 1992-1993, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1990-1993, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Memb. 1993-1997 and Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Advisory Board Memb. 2000-2001.  
**Charles C. Ragsdell, Dept. of Arkansas**. Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 2000-2001, Dept. Cmdr. 1993-1994, and Nat'l Public Relations Cmsn. Memb. 1993-1995, 1996-2000 and 2001-2004.  
**Ernest N. Schmit, Dept. of North Dakota**. Nat'l Adj. 1967, Dept. Cmdr. 1957-1958, Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1965-1966, Nat'l Cmdr.'s Aide 1966-1967, Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Memb. 1966-1972, Nat'l Finance Cmsn. Ex-Officio Sec. 1967, Nat'l Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Sec. 1967, 50th Anniversary Cmte. Ex-Officio Memb. 1967, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1972-1980, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Chmn. 1972-1980, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Chmn. 1980-1981, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Consultant 1981-1984, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Memb. 1984-2006 and Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2006-2007.  
**Dale D. Snow, Dept. of Nebraska**. Dept. Cmdr. 1973-1974.

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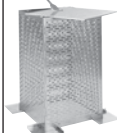
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*Everyone talks about the weather, but no one ever does anything about it.*

**AT A CAMPAIGN RALLY**, an embattled politician running for re-election declared, "Despite what the ethics committee concluded, my conscience is clean."

"I bet," came a voice from the audience. "That's because you've never used it."

**ONE OLD MAN** said to another, "I just had another birthday. It's awful to grow old alone."

"But you have your wife," the second man pointed out.

"Yes, but she hasn't had a birthday in 15 years."

**A CITY GIRL** was vacationing with her family in the country, and she became friendly with a local farm boy. One evening, as they strolled across a pasture, they saw a cow and a calf affectionately rubbing noses.

"Gee," the boy said, "seeing that kind of makes me want to do the same."

"Go ahead," the girl replied. "It's your cow."

**TWO ENTREPRENEURS** at a networking event tried to make small talk.

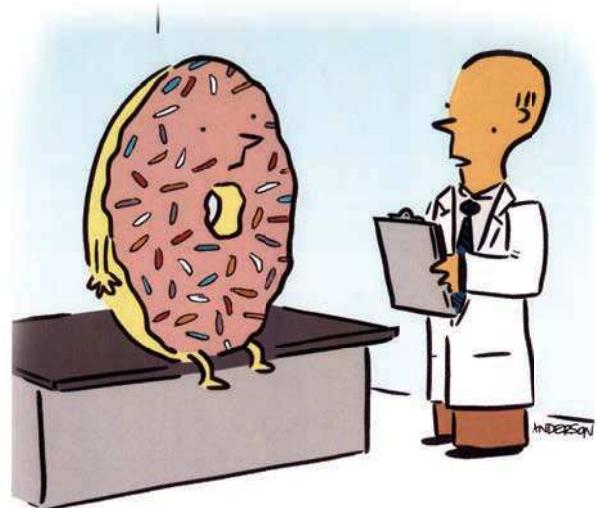
"Hey, do you believe in survival of the fittest?" one asked.

"I don't believe in the survival of anybody," the other replied. "I'm an undertaker."

**DID YOU HEAR** about the comedian who told the same jokes three nights running? He didn't dare tell them standing still.



"The average person finds 10 to 25 coins under his furniture cushions every year, but you haven't reported any."



"When did you begin to notice the sprinkles?"

**A MOTORIST** received a receipt from the police clerk for his traffic fine.

"Oh, come on," he complained. "What am I supposed to do with this?"

"Keep it," the clerk replied. "When you collect four, you get a bicycle."

**A MAN AND HIS WIFE** were driving home from a friend's party. "Honey, has anyone ever told you how handsome, sexy and irresistible you are to women?" she asked.

Flattered, he replied, "No, I don't recall anyone ever telling me that."

"Then whatever gave you that idea at the party tonight?"

**"NASA SAYS** the Mars rover has made a major discovery. Scientists hope it found signs of life there. Americans are just hoping it found some Twinkies." – Jimmy Fallon



"Sweet tire tracks. My mom is gonna freak!"

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*Turner W. Branch, a principal and senior partner of the Branch Law Firm, retired as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1968. He served on active duty in Camp Pendleton, California and at the Marine Corps Air Facility (MCAF) in Santa Ana, California. While at Camp Pendleton he served with the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (FMF) USMC.*

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